The Operational History
of the
117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mech.)
World War II

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We thanked the children and the nuns and promised that the American Armor Cavalry would not forget them. Neither we did and sent an ample supply of food each month until the end of the war and upon our return home.

Essex Troop continued to support the Italian Orphanage until 1957 when it was abandoned.

Prior to loading various ships with the heavy equipment of the Squadron, I had an opportunity to visit the ruins of Focepi where the attacked sketch was made for the equivalent of $1.00 in American Military Script. I believe it is a very good likeness for the times, at least everyone who saw it thought so.

The ruins were quite interesting and spent the good part of the day looking over every part of the ruined City.

That evening, I drove to Sorrento which is situated on a Mountainside overlooking the Bay of Naples. Fortunately, located a quaint and small Hotel called the "Lorelie" which was situated at the edge of a cliff directly over the bay. The owner formerly lived in Brooklyn and he was honored that an American Major located his Hotel.

He and his wife went all out to prepare a most superb dinner which included soup, salad, fish, French fries and Lobster. He dug up some very special wines and the owner's wife whipped up the most delicious Italian pastry.

The dinner was served on the outdoor patio with candle light. My thoughts were far removed from the War and the impending invasion of Southern France. It was a night indeed to remember!

Upon returning to our bivouac the next day, I received the attached letter from Captain Thomas P. Kennedy, Master of the S.S. Grenville H. Dodge, the Ship we sailed on from North Africa to Naples.
Soldiers of the Seventh Army:

We are embarking for a decisive campaign in Europe. Side by side, wearing the same uniform and using the same equipment, battle-experienced French and American soldiers are fighting with a single purpose and common aim -- Destruction of Nazism and the German Army. The agonized people of Europe anxiously await our coming. We cannot and will not fail. We will not stop until the last vestige of German tyranny has been completely crushed. So greater honor could come to us then this opportunity to fight for the bitter end in order to restore all that is good and decent and righteous in mankind. We are an inspired Army. God be with us.

(a) A. M. Patch
(t) A. M. Patch
Major General, U.S. Army
Commanding

Reproduced by:
HQ. DEPT. "MARINE ROBIN"
Office of the Troop C.O.
13 August 1944

Strike The Underbelly

Operation "Anvil"

Seventh Army - Aug. 15, 1944
The overall plan for the crusade in Europe and the ultimate smashing of the Nazi war machine called for an invasion of Southern France and a drive northward that would eventually link the forces of Seventh Army coming from the south with the Allied armies which by August, 1944, had broken out of the Normandy Beachhead across France, Belgium, and Germany. This was OPERATION ANVIL, an amphibious invasion on the southern coast of France. Some weeks before the invasion, it was felt the code name ANVIL had been compromised and the operational code name was changed to DRAGOON. The invading force was Truscott's VI Corps. On 29 June, 1944, Captain Oscar Brown brought from Headquarters, Fifth Army orders assigning the 117th Squadron to Seventh Army for attachment to VI Corps. Hodge was ordered to move the squadron to Naples. Brown was sent ahead as an advance party. At 0300 the following day, the troopers broke bivouac North of Rome and headed a convoy of wheeled vehicles towards the port city. Troop E and Company F convoyed the track vehicles to Civitavecchia where they were to load on LST’s for a water move to Naples. A 270 mile motor move South brought Squadron Headquarters and the troops to Teano, a village 47 miles north of Naples where XII Corps ordered the 117th into bivouac. First order of business was motor maintenance and it continued for three days as the Squadron worked to put its battle weary tanks, armored cars, jeeps, and other vehicles into shape for the future operations. Troop E
During the stay at Teano officers and enlisted men received their first passes since coming to Italy. Intensive training for personnel replacements, cross-country marches for all personnel and inter-troop athletics were conducted during the Squadron stay at Teano. A villa at nearby Formia was opened. Meanwhile Hodge, Ginger Brown, and several non-coms moved into the "Blockhouse" in Naples where Truscott's staff was planning OPERATION ANVIL. It was here that the Squadron officers first met Brigadier General Frederic B. Butler, the assistant corps commander who was to command a task force in Southern France which was to win wide acclaim for what was probably the outstanding cavalry type operation of the entire war. The task force was to take its commanders name and its principle component was to be the 117th Squadron. Hodge and his staff devoted most of their time planning the operations of Task Force Butler. The story of Task Force Butler and the part the 117th Squadron played in that operation is a chapter in itself. Well only not a chapter.

Operation Anvil was to be a three division assault on a stretch of beach extending from Toulon to Cannes, and was to be a co-operation of the 1st, 3rd, and 5th Divisions. It was to be a surprise attack on the Axis forces in the area. The 3rd Division was to be the primary attacking force, while the 5th and 1st Divisions were to provide support. The 117th Squadron, along with several other units, was to provide air support and reconnaissance for the 3rd Division.

The invasion was to take place during the night of 15 August, and was planned to be a surprise attack on the Axis forces in the area. The 3rd Division was to be the primary attacking force, while the 5th and 1st Divisions were to provide support. The 117th Squadron, along with several other units, was to provide air support and reconnaissance for the 3rd Division.

The terrain in the invasion area was rugged, with heavy forests and few first-class roads. The coastal area was to be the responsibility of the German XIX Army. It was estimated to have 12 divisions available, several of which had been seriously cut up in the Normandy operation and had been moved to Southern France for periods of rest and reorganization. The 117th Squadron was to be a critical element in the Allied counteroffensive, elements of which were to be the first to confront the 117th Division in the critical St. Raphaël area a few days after the landings. The first effort of the invading force would be to push far enough inland to put the beachhead out of the range of enemy artillery.
Italy and which carried the bitter memory of the disastrous Rapido River crossings; the 45th, a Guard division from Oklahoma and adjoining states; and the 3rd, a Regular Army Division. The operations plan called for the attachment of a reconnaissance troop of the 117th to each division. Troop A went with the 36th, Troop B to the 45th and Troop C to the 3rd. To each troop was attached a platoon of the squadron’s tank company and a platoon of its Assault Gun Troop. The three troops, with the attached platoons, moved into the areas of the divisions to which they were attached and trained with the division for the weeks before landing out. Headquarters and Headquarters Troop remained in the bivouac at Enoc until time for loading aboard assault craft. Elements of the Squadron’s medical detachment were broken down and accompanied each of the recon troops. While preparing for Anvil, Troop E received new self-propelled 105mm howitzers, M7, to replace the lighter 75mm howitzers with which they operated in the Italian campaign.

Omer Brown moved from the Squadron staff to command of E Troop, taking over from __________. On 12 August, elements of the 117th were aboard landing craft and attack transports the Squadron commander with Warrant Officer __________. Fort were aboard the Barnett, one of the two command ships for the invasion. On 13 August, the convoy was formed and sailed from Naples, passing through the straits of Corsica and Sardinia the following day. Before dawn on 16 August, the Armada dropped anchor off the coast of Southern France and with the first light of day, the naval and air bombardment commenced. At 0500, the initial assault wave of Truscott’s VI Corps hit the beaches and moved inland against light opposition. First unit of the 117th to land was B Troop which went in with the 45th Division at H plus 17 minutes. The troopers moved inland screening the advance of the infantry. The Navy’s demolition units were not able to break the underground demolitions in one area and the 3rd Division was forced to go ashore at an alternate point near St. Raphael. Troop C was ashore by early afternoon. Meanwhile Troop A, with the 36th Division, was encountering fierce opposition and made limited advanced on D-day. The following day, however, it screened the move of the 36th Division to Le May, making contact with elements the Airborne Division. Troop C was on left flank against slight enemy resistance. Troop B on 16 August was moving northwest, and it also found little enemy opposition. On 17 August, the entire Squadron was ordered to assemble at Le May and Task Force Butler became a reality.
After Colonel Leo V. Warner joined the headquarters in July, 1944, as Deputy Chief of Staff, all General Staff positions remained unchanged throughout the Seventh Army's campaign into France and Germany except that of A. C. of S., G-5. Colonel Gerry was called to higher headquarters in October and was replaced by Colonel John J. Albright. Shortly thereafter Colonel Albright went to the 36th Infantry Division and on 4 December 1944, Colonel Joseph L. Canby became A. C. of S., G-5. Colonel Canby held the post during the remainder of the operation and well into the occupational period.

Two days after his appointment, General Patch was briefed on all planning which had been accomplished to date. He was able to inform his staff, as a result of conferences with high military sources while en route to his new assignment, that in principle ANVIL had definitely been approved by the War Department and would enjoy a second priority in the world-wide operations of United States forces. He urged each officer to exert his best efforts for a successful completion of this major mission.

Basically, the Appreciation and Outline furnished Force 163 by AFHQ remained the governing plan. It was still envisaged, at the time General Patch assumed command, that ANVIL forces would invade southern France in conjunction with OVERLORD, establish a bridgehead, and subsequently exploit toward Lyon and Vichy. The target date was early June, although nominations of American and French components in the operation were yet undecided and would continue to depend on the progress of the battle in Italy. More imminent was the fact that an Outline Plan, coordinated with Naval and Air Task Force commanders, was to be submitted for AFHQ approval by 15 April.

Target Date Changes

Through the months to come, the original recommendations for the assault area as formulated under General Davidson were to remain intact. During March, conferences were held with the Air Corps and the Navy to discuss such matters as the employment of the Mediterranean Allied Air Forces, pre-D-Day bombing, the organization of the
in water five feet deep. I held my equipment and gun over my head and soon were on the Beach where we quickly moved inland under cover.

Strong outposts were maintained at night while our Headquarters developed communications with all elements of the Squadron. There was a strong exhilarating excitement among our Staff in making a successful assault landing on "D" Day. It was a great comforting feeling of relief.

On the second day, all of the Reconnaissance Troops advanced inland with "B" Troop in the center making the greatest progress. Troop "A" and the 36th Infantry Division attacked strongly and the German resistance gave ground. By nightfall there remained little doubt of the successful Beach assault of the American Seventh Army against now identified, the Nineteenth Germany Army.

The French Army, fighting for the first time as a separate unified command, attacked Marseilles and liberated this great Port City after several days of difficult fighting.

The casualty losses for the Squadron in two days of fighting were three killed and twenty wounded. Included was Lt. James Shem who was seriously wounded with a bullet two inches from his heart. Jim was to return to the Squadron within six months and I was, after the War, to serve as God Father to his first child, Susan.

On the third day of the invasion, orders were received from the Seventh Army to assemble the entire Squadron in the vicinity of Le May France, which is situated about thirty-five miles inland from St. Maxine Beach where we had landed.

This group was designated "Task Force Butler" and its Mission was to advance aggressively toward Sisteron, France, (fifty miles northwest of Le May) and thence either;

(A) Seize and hold the high ground north of Grenoble, or
(B) Seize the high ground immediately south of Lyon astraddle the Rhone River, or
(C) Advance to the high ground on the East Bank of the Rhone River between Montelimar and Livron.

General Butler, superimposed his small Staff on that of the Squadron Staff for means of tactical control, operations and communications. I became Operations Officer for the Task Force and the General and I hit it off exceptionally well. He was my type of leader, bold, aggressive and all Soldier.

A word about the General, he was a gruff regular Army Officer, exceptionally capable and highly aggressive. A man of about fifty-five. He was all Soldier and represented all the exceptional fine traditions that West Point develops of its Graduates.
General Butler was utterly fearless and demanded the maximum effort from all who served under him. At times it was embarrassing as he more often consulted with me rather than Colonel Hodge.

Nevertheless, it all worked out well and it was our greatest adventure of the entire War.

The operations of the "Butler Task Force in Southern France is completely narrated in Part 2 of this Chapter for the award of a "Presidential Unit Citation" to the Squadron for their outstanding accomplishments.

Unfortunately, due to the time it took to process the complete report, two years after the War, the War Department did not act favorably upon it. This was strange and we never quite understood this decision, as the French Government, in their decision No. 267, signed by President Bidault of France and attested by General of the Army "Juin" on the 22nd of July 1946. The French Government awarded the "Croix de Guerre with Palm" to the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron for their extraordinary combat operations from Provence (The Seacoast) to Lorraine near Strasbourg, France on the Rhine. Copy of the award is attached. Very few American Units in World War II received this highest award of the French Government.

The following pages of Part 2 is the full and complete story of the "Butler Task Force" and the leading part that the 117th Mez. Cavalry Squadron played in one of the most extraordinary exploits of World War II.

In twelve days of combat, the Squadron liberated approximately 6645 square miles of Southern France, advanced more than 185 miles and captured 3500 German prisoners, including three Generals. Our total strength never exceeded 750 Officers and enlisted men!

At the close of the War, Seventh Army Historians prepared and published in three large volumes, "Report of Operations" and which are on my book shelves.

A complete account of "Butler Task Force" operations are described in Volume One, on Pages 173, 176 to 179, 184 to 189, 197, 198, 204, 214, 221, 225, 226, 242 to 244, 253, 255, 259, 260, 270, 271 and 274.

Perhaps what was said on Page 225 sums up the successful accomplishment of the Squadron's Mission when XII Tactical Command Air Intelligence stated, "it should be recognized that it was the brilliantly conceived and executed operation of Task Force Butler in effecting the road block (at Montelimar) which developed one of the finest Air Targets ever offered the Tactical Units of this Command."
SHADES OF JEB STUART

Although the bulk of the 117th Squadron by now, nearly three and half years after
formation into Federal service, was made up of men assigned from replacement centers, some
of them in recent months; most of the officers and senior non-coms in the outfit were
enlisted from way back and the operation on which they were about to embark was a
challenger's idea of a real mission. What was coming up was a "Go for Break" operation,
would dash through the rugged hill country of Southern France, with an objective 125
miles deep in enemy territory.

Part of VI Corp's attack force was a combat command of a French Armored division.

Truscott, according to his writings, was disturbed by the possibility that once the Corps
was ashore, he would lose the French unit and thus be without sufficient armor to
secure any tactical success. Plans called for the French, coming ashore later, to take
Marseille and Aix and when it came time for this Truscott felt certain he would lose
his French Armor. To overcome this problem, Truscott, two weeks before the Corps sailed
from Naples, called on his assistant, Brigadier General Frederic B. Butler, to organize
a task force heavy in armor. Truscott, an old cavalryman, ordered that the force be
built around the 117th Squadron, and it was as the result of this that Hodge, along with
Captain Oscar Brown, who was later replaced by Captains John Brown, Wode, Sergeant
Hulse and T/4 Lagovski, moved into the VI Corps operations headquarters in
Naples to plan the Butler Task Force operation.

The primary mission of Butler Task Force was to sever the main line of communications
of the German forces opposing the three divisions of VI Corps and/or harass and cut off,
if possible, the fleeing German 19th Army. To some degree, the tactical situation
would, naturally, affect the basic plan. There were three possibilities. The force
should be prepared to seize and hold high ground north of Grenoble, to push forward
and seize high ground at other points along the Rhone River, or seize high ground in the
vicinity of Montelimar.
The task force included, in addition to the 117th, the 59th Field Artillery Battalion, the 73rd Tank Battalion (-), Second Battalion, 143rd Infantry Regiment; Company C, 536th Tank Destroyer Battalion; Company F, 344th Engineer Regiment; Company C, and part of Company D, 117th Medical Battalion; 3426th Quartermaster Truck Company and Detachment of the 87th Ordnance Company and Corps Military Police.

Butler, after being told by Truscott that he was to command the task force, went about assembling a staff and planning the operation. He decided that his staff, drawn from among the various assistants of the VI Corps staff, would be superimposed on the staff of the 117th and the communications for the entire force would be built around the squadron's radio net. Hodge, a top notch staff planner who possessed also extensive command experience, became the key officer in the planning of the operations of Butler Task Force and worked feverishly at the Elcock House in Naples for several weeks prior to the invasion. Before departing Naples, Butler decided to direct the main effort of the force over roads running eastward from Draguignan to Salernes, to Reis, then north to Craion and Sisteron. He thus avoided the main highway in the area, the Route Napoleon. The plan called for Task Force Butler, with the recon troops of the 117th pacing the force and providing flank protection, to move out at 0530 on 18 August, passing through the outposts of the 36th Division on the Corps' right flank, and head toward Draguignan. Troop C jumped off first and shortly engaged the Germans near Draguignan. It had the mission of protecting the right flank of the force.

A Troop was spearheading the advance of the main column and meeting at the start only slight enemy resistance. The column advanced west towards Salernes. The third platoon of Troop A was dispatched west to Barjols to protect the left and rear flank of the task force. The platoon, under __________ ran into stiff enemy resistance, including self-propelled anti-tank fire which was silenced only after the force commander reinforced the platoon with a section of tank destroyers. Heavy fire fights continued until sunset. The platoon outposted Barjols to contain any threat to the flank of Butler's cavalrymen. Shortly after dark a motorized regimental combat team of the 3rd Division arrived on the outskirts of the village and relieved the Third platoon.

Earlier in the day's actions, elements of Troop C bagged the 117th's prize catch of the war, a German corps commander, Lieutenant General Ferdinand Neuling. The commander of the German XXII Corps, who had eluded capture the day before by units of the provisional airborne division, was taken in an action north of Draguignan by the third platoon commanded by __________ along with the General, the Troop captured his entire staff. The prisoners were brought back to the village and word passed to Hodge of the capture. Hodge sent word to Butler who started immediately for Draguignan to accept the formal surrender. When Butler arrived, he found Neuling seated on a bench in the village square guarded by troopers with the French populace yelling for his scalp. The General was weeping, but he shouldn't have felt badly, he was captured by elements of an outfit that was accustomed to taking generals as prisoners. More than three years earlier in the Carolina maneuvers, a platoon of __________ Troop under __________ took an American Corps Commander prisoner in simulated operations in the Carolina maneuvers.

Troop C turned their prize over to Butler, but, reportedly, not all of the very fine brandy that was among the supplies captured, at least Butler suspects most of the bottle of brandy was withheld. The Force commander, after a brief discussion with Neuling, sent him back under officer escort to VI Corps headquarters. By noon, Troop C had overcome fierce enemy resistance and continued its advance northwest protecting the right flank of the Butler Task Force.
Tells of Capture Of Nazi General

A Swedish raiding plane has snatched several Nazi generals in a surprise attack behind German lines.

The generals were taken prisoner at various points along the French-German border, including the town of Châlons-en-Champagne.

Local residents described the raid as "absolutely thrilling." 

Lt. General J. Simms, who is known for his strategic thinking, is said to have been among those captured.

"The German generals were taken completely by surprise," said one local resident. "They were still mulling over the minutes that had just passed when the raiders arrived with their guns blazing.

The Germans were caught off guard, and the raiders were able to make their way through their lines with ease.

The French AMF (Armée de l'Air Forces) have been on high alert for signs of German invasion, and have finally seen their efforts pay off.

Lt. General Simms, who was the highest-ranking officer captured, is said to be in good spirits despite his capture.

"I have always believed in the power of the human spirit," he said. "Despite the odds, I remain hopeful and confident in our ability to defeat the enemy.

In his final words, he added: "I will not be defeated by the enemy. I will continue to fight until the very end."

The news of the capture of the German generals has sent shockwaves through the Allied forces, who are now prepared to launch a full-scale offensive against the enemy.

The French AMF will continue to monitor the situation closely, and will take any necessary measures to protect our borders.
villagers told Butler was that repeated attempts by allied bombers had failed to destroy the crossing. Since it was obvious the Allies wanted the bridge destroyed and had failed in their efforts, the local Marquis finished the job. The column rolled on and, by 1800 with several hours of daylight remaining, Hodge set up squadron headquarters northeast of Reis. By dark, Troop A outposted north of Valensole, Troop B did likewise north of Puimoisson. Troop C secured the village of Reis. In one day the Squadron had advanced some 50 miles into enemy territory. Off to the right were the French Alps. To the Squadron's left was the Rhone River. More than 50 miles to its rear was the body of VI Corps and in between was most of the German XIX Army.

In the planning of Task Force Butler, Truscott had asked Hodge how long he thought it would take for the force to reach Sisteron. Hodge estimated, "three days, possibly two". Truscott indicated that an optimistic estimate and he settled for an assurance that Reis would be taken by the end of the first day. Hodge knew the capability of his outfit. He had planned and commanded the 959 miles dash the Squadron made in moving from Algiers to Marrakesh in less than two days.

Barring opposition greater than intelligence indicated, Hodge was confident the Squadron could push to Sisteron in less than three days. As it was to turn out, Hodge had given Truscott a sound estimate.

As the Task Force moved northward, it was joined by increasing numbers of Marquis units of which were assigned to the various elements of the Force. Butler, in reviewing the successful operation of his Task Force, wrote that "it is only fair to state that the without the Marquis our mission would have been far more difficult, if not impossible".

Butler's plan for the second day of operation called for the main body to move on Sisteron. Troop B, under Wood's command and reinforced with elements of the Assault

...
was encountering resistance at nearby Malijai where it finally forced a crossing of the Rhone River and took the village.

To help out the hard pressed First Platoon of Troop B at Malijai, Butler dispatched a company of infantry and one of medium tanks. Their arrival on the scene prompted the enemy to flee into the hills. Tanks and infantry then moved to the north of Digne to aid the main body of B Troop. Their arrival of the larger force there also disheartened the enemy to the point of surrender. Wood moved his troop to Sisteron to rejoin the Squadron, leaving Digne to the Marquis.

Meanwhile Troop C fanned out to the west, protecting the left flank of Butler's fast moving caravan. Its first platoon reached the village of Banon and outposted it for the night. The bulk of the troop went further north to the town of St. Etienne-Organes, moving against only slight enemy opposition. The main body of the Task force moved into Sisteron. It was then end of the second day and perhaps Hodge's estimate had even been conservative when he told Truscott his command would be there in "three days, perhaps two."

Butler was still out of contact with VI Corps and had little knowledge of the overall situation. He was thus hardly prepared to plan the third day's operation. Should he go north to Grenoble, or move west to the Rhone. Of only one move he was certain. He directed a move against the town of Gap and for this Hodge picked Troop A and attached to Piddington's command additional tanks and infantry, including Marquis.

On Sunday, 20 August, the third day of operation for Task Force Butler, the 117th except Troop A and most of Brown's Assault Gun Troop which were engaged at Gap, carried out limited reconnaissance and waited orders for further action. Back at VI Corps headquarters, Truscott, as he wrote later, found this to be a day for decision. Aerial reconnaissance reported there was as yet no general withdrawal of the German XIX Army, but of it was still east of the Rhone. He was concerned that the 11th Panzer Division, one of the German's best divisions, had moved southward in the days following the Allied landings. It was the 11th which was to prove in the next few days to be the toughest force the 117th was to encounter throughout the war. Truscott was certain the Germans were beyond concentrating for a major counterattack. The German move, Truscott was convinced, would be withdrawal to the north through the Montelimar Gap.

He dispatched this message to Butler by a senior staff officer, Colonel Theodore J. Conroy:

"You will move at first light, 21 August with all possible speed to Montelimar. Block enemy routes of withdrawal up the Rhone Valley in that vicinity. 36th Division follows you."

Actually Butler had his force better dispersed to move north to Grenoble. The Force and Squadron CP had been moved to Arpagn from Sisteron. It was 90 miles from Arpagn to Montelimar, a considerable distance to cover in one day, but those were the orders Butler sent for Hodge and directed him to move at the first sign of dawn.

His route to Montelimar was over a mountain range and the road was narrow; ledge cut in the side of the mountains. Troop B was leading the column and by midmorning it had reached the highest point in the area, overlooking Highway 7 on the east bank of the Rhone. Wood established his CP at Marsanne. He moved two platoon south to the outskirts of Montelimar and established a line running through the villages of Savasse, Cordillac and Mirande. In the valley below, along Highway 7, the advance elements of the German XIX Army were already moving northward. The light tanks and armored cars opened fire on the enemy column, throwing it into utter confusion. So swift had been
the squadron's move that the Germans were caught completely unaware. Their planes were still taking off from the airstrip at Montelimar and were taken under fire by the armored cars and tanks. Had it been possible to move strong reinforcements into the area, it is probable the entire XIX Army would have been destroyed. But the bulk of VI Corps was still well over 100 miles to the rear and it would be several days before all of the 36th Division could be deployed in the area. As it turned out the fighting around Montelimar continued for many days and was probably the major action in the operations of the Seventh Army in Southern France. Immediately ahead lay nearly a week of bitter fighting for the 117th and the other elements of Butler Task Force.

Troop C, with _______ commanding, pushed through Crest, along the north bank of the Drome River where the second platoon took escaping Germans crossing a ford under fire and destroyed several vehicles, thus blocking the ford. First another platoon ran into a column of enemy vehicles on a highway in the area and "with guns blazing drove through twisting and dodging enemy vehicles along the way." By the time they had blasted their way through, the troopers had destroyed more than 30 enemy vehicles. The third platoon, under _______ advanced north from Crest to Peugier to protect the right flank of the force. Hodge set up his CP at Marsanne. By nightfall the enemy launched a counterattack and it was necessary to pull back elements of Troops B and C. The Squadron CP was blasted by artillery during the night and was forced to relocate. By nightfall Piddington closed his reinforced A Troop into the area and as events were to prove it was none too soon, for Butler was facing an enemy force that was building up and was determined to keep open its only escape route. The Germans continued strong patrols throughout the Squadron's first night at Montelimar. By the following morning Butler had his entire Force deployed in the area. Most of his infantry battalion was in the Condillac Pass, the 117th Squadron was maintaining a line of outposts and operating strong patrols. From its positions it was able to mass fire on the fleeing German column in the valley. Piddington's still reinforced troop was at Pay St. Martin, Butler, writing about the action, described the present situation:

"Although we did not hold the main east bank highway along the Rhone during the daylight hours of the 22nd, little lived to escape on that road. The artillery covered the road in the vicinity of Montelimar as well as the valleys therein. Tanks, tank destroyers, armored cars, even ground mounted 57's of the infantry were pouring aimed fire at the dense traffic. In addition the 59th Armored Artillery by excellent spotting and good luck bagged several trains and the railway on the east bank was blocked."

By afternoon of the 22nd, the situation was serious. Five Mark V tanks supported by Panzer grenadiers crossed the Rhone River, running into Troop A positions. With its attached Sherman tanks, Piddington managed to rout the enemy force but not before his Third platoon under _______ was surrounded. After destroying its equipment, including two armored cars and three jeeps, the platoon fled on foot into the hills and escaped capture. All of the platoon found their way back to the Squadron the following day. The enemy proved to be elements of the 11th Panzer. Other tanks plowed into Troop B sectors but were repelled.

Troop C and Troop E were holding the north flank along the Drome River from Loriol east to Crane. Omer Brown had his assault guns in position dominating the entire escape corridor. He poured murderous fire at 2500 yards, setting afire hundreds of enemy vehicles. This was the vital and commanding ground in the area. By holding it, the retreat of the entire XIX Army could be delayed, even cutoff completely. The Germans could not permit this and nothing short of a major effort to displace the American force could be expected.

Meanwhile back at Corps headquarters, Truscott was concerned about the situation developing in the north. The 36th was slow in reaching Montelimar, and nothing less than a division could hold out for long. As Butler commented later, there is a vast difference between getting an advance guard of light, fast-moving armor into an enemy stronghold, and having a stronghold on that enemy. Task Force Baker was almost surrounded by an enemy that was building up his forces obviously to make the effort
necessary to hold open the Gap at Montelimar, so vital to his escape. Truscott went to Aspres to check on the progress of the 36th. The division commander was at Gap, but Truscott learned that the ACI that should have already been at Montelimar had not yet moved out. Truscott made known his displeasure and ordered the ACI and a battery of artillery to move to Montelimar immediately.

On the 23 August, the Squadron was deployed with Troop C and elements of E and the Tank Company, reinforced with tank destroyers and infantry, was on the northern flank. Troop B was attached to a battalion of infantry of the 36th Division which had just arrived during the day was in the southeast corner of the Force sector. Troop A, reinforced and with Marquis attached was on the south flank and there was engaged for the second time by a strong enemy force which it again turned back. Troop B was attacking Montelimar along with a battalion of infantry and force of Marquis. Into the day, command of the task force passed to the commanding general of the 36th Division. Its mission accomplished. The Force had seized and held the high ground at Montelimar as Truscott had directed, but for some days to come the 117th, attached to the 36th Division was to fight in the area of Montelimar.

The invasion of Southern France and the operations of the Seventh Army did not receive the attention in the press or from Army historians to compare with the extensive press coverage of the Normandy invasion and the Italian campaign. It was initially a corps operation with later employment of units of the reconstituted French Army. For this reason the Task Force Butler operation, certainly one of the most colorful and dashing ventures of the entire war, went almost unnoticed. It was a classical cavalry operation. In four days, the 117th Squadron had advanced 235 miles, sweeping through several thousand square miles of enemy held territory and liberating many towns and villages. It had captured a corps commander and his entire staff and more...
than 2500 prisoners. In the final action, before passing to control of the infantry division, more than 1000 German vehicles had been destroyed and the retreat of an entire German Army stalled.

In his observation of the feat, Butler gives much credit to his corps commander. He wrote:

"General Truscott visualized the tactical possibilities of such a group. It was his sound decision that sent it into the valley of the Rhone instead of on to Grenoble for a hollow but sweet sounding achievement. It was a cavalryman, Truscott, who stipulated that the Group would be built around the Corps Reconnaissance squadron - the 117th."
Task Force Butler

by Brigadier General Frederic B. Butler

PART I

This is the first of two articles on the operations of a Provisional Armored and Mechanized Cavalry Unit in exploiting the invasion of Southern France. Through the valuable medium of personal experience we mold our basis for improvement of our Army of the future. We have some interesting reading to boot.

(Introductory Note: On August 15, 1944 the U.S. Seventh Army landed on the coast of southern France in the area between Toulon and Cannes. The U.S. VI Corps, commanded by Lieutenant General Lucian K. Truscott, made the initial assault at 8 A.M., with the 3d Infantry Division on the left in the St. Tropez area, the 36th Infantry Division on the right in the Frejus area, and the 45th Infantry Division in the center near St. Maxime. Already a Provisional Airborne Division had been dropped several miles inland and was cutting the German communications with the beach area. The highly successful landings were followed by an immediate consolidation of the beachhead, movement west by the 3d Division to isolate Toulon and Marseille, east by the 36th Division to the Italian border, while the 45th Division made contact with the airborne troops and drove northward in the center. Following the American units over the beaches on D + 1 the French II Corps consisting of two infantry, one motorized and armored divisions landed in support of the U.S. VI Corps. According to the plan the French were earmarked for the assault on the ports of Toulon and Marseille, the rapid advance of the Americans during the first two days made this assault imminent. The release of the French stripped VI Corps of its only armored division and caused the Corps Commander to bring into being as planned a provisional armored group composed of corps armored units under the command of the Assistant to the Corps Commander, Brigadier General Frederic B. Butler. This article is General Butler's personal memoir of the operations of the task force that was to bear his name. General Butler served as Assistant Division Commander, 34th Infantry Division, and Assistant to the Corps Commander, VI Corps. He is now Sixth Army Engineer.

This account of his experiences was written from memory while he was crossing the Pacific in 1946. The undersigned as a member of the Army Historical Division borrowed the manuscript for research and secured General Butler's permission to edit and publish it.—Major James D. T. Hamilton.)
I was to change direction. What is more I was to be on my objective before dark that night. I was better poised to continue north but that was my fault. I had made my decision to head North 1500 prisoners of war to our technicality, but actually in the heart of the French. An attack on Gap at this time would have been a spark in a powder keg. I therefore immediately ordered the destroyers and cavalry, seize and defend Col Bayard. Maquis protected the incipient stroke. With heavy armor by its side, Maquis was worth a lot. No sign of the 36th and it could not be raised on the radio. I hoped for a quick return. I could get it on my objective. I could sustain that. But I was not satisfied.

The enemy force north of Gap developed into not more than a patrol and was driven back with a few casualties. The enemy would follow this single patrol had it not been, I do not know.

The movement towards Montelimar continued. A enemy column lay over a formidable mountain range with a road out of the side. The movements of the road would have been impossible. Our path was now open to any of one of the few roads not under enemy action. Maquis, fortunate nature of the road to east all elements had made excellent time and none of the vehicles had succeeded.

At this point it is well to comment on the operation of the message. One of the light tanks that had fallen by the wayside and a few of the armored cars were out of action. The heavy tanks were doing well, but the diesel driven tank destroyers were giving trouble. We brought in, however, every tank to the operation. The Maquis special headquarters at Aspres and leaping onto to Dieu and St. Jeannet.

Whether we have the Maquis to thank for this free open road I do not know, but it was soon as the point reached the summit I closed out the headquarters at Aspres and leaping onto to Dieu and St. Jeannet and the natural of the road to east all elements had made excellent time and none of the vehicles had succeeded.

Time was short. My first step was to select a staff assistant in the various Corps staff sections. Next, a provisional troop list was prepared. Then the detailed map was made of make-up dates for the journey. After this was complete, I had my head quadrants and staff officers prepared.

In evolving a command and communications plan, it was necessary to consider certain considerations, one to draw on the Corps Signal troops to assist in the manner of the Reconnaissance Squadron and develop communications around its net. The former plan was by now on Corps that I abandoned that plan and decided to build around the latter with a new. The details of all units were speedily prepared and the plan was executed, and communications officers were clothed with Force Signal Officer. An SOI was produced and photographed.

The Force was approved consisting of the following:

17th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron

59th Armored Field Artillery Battalion

53rd Tank Battalion (less one Medium and one Light Tank companies)

3d Battalion, 134th Infantry Regiment

Co. B, 1st Armored Field Artillery Battalion

Co. F, 344th Engineer Regiment

Co. C, 111th Medical Battalion

42nd Detachment, Quartermaster Truck Company

Detachment, 87th Ordnance Company

Detachment, Military Police (Y-18)

Subsequent conferences were held with the Corps Commander and prior to sailing, the mission had narrowed to a single possibility. "To proceed to Siserton and either capture or destroy the trains and leave Grenoble or to turn west and seize the high ground north of Montelimar." All unit commanders involved were briefed on this, the selected route, and all pertinent details. The participation of the French command was blank. The Force was formed of the selected unit and the plan was approved by Lieutenant General Alexander A. Patch, Commanding General, Seventh Army.

As planned, the Provence-Marseille Group, subsequently to be dubbed by the correspondents "Task Force Butler," was nothing more than a plan. Late in the afternoon of August 15, 1944, the Division had physical contact with the Airborne Division in and around LeMuy. General Truscott ordered the Force to assemble during the day of August 17, prepared to pass through the 63rd Division at daylight of the following day. The prepared plan went into effect and the Assembly was completed. It was not until after this that Corps C-4 and the Corps Engineer between them could not miss the Engineer Company, a unit that had never smelled powder.

Late in the afternoon of the 17th, Truscott issued his oral order to me. Siserton remained the objective. After some discussion on the subject, I was permitted my choice of routes. Back in Naples, I had tentatively selected the route to Nule (Nurenburg). Due north west to Digne, then north through Sissone and Gap to Grenoble, for the route of advance. It had appeared to be the more direct and had the advantage of a proposed right of way through the mountains. Every effort was made to secure road data, maps were studied and terrain appreciation. Prior to leaving Naples, I made the decision, however, to direct the main advance along the Route to Piri-Salerno-Orsimo. Careful study of the Route to Naples indicated the terrain so mountainous it would not be a route for a single self-propelled gun could have made this "cavalry sweep" just another crawling Italian campaign. Development proved the choice made in Naples to have been a sound one, and if one needs an lesson the need for early appreciation, no better lesson than this need be cited.

As an estimate of time necessary to reach Siserton, the Group Commander accounted for three days for due, possibly two days. Further questioning by General Truscott, who seemed a bit incredulous, guaranteed him Riez, 45 miles from Dragoon, as the objective for the first night.

As soon as the conditions were favorable, the group could be assembled in the bucolic north of LeMuy, the situation was reviewed, the order of the situation was reviewed, the order was issued. The importance of the situation was reviewed. All possible liaison was established with the
36th Division to assure a smooth passage through the outposts to the north and east. Daylight of the 18th was set for the passage of lines.

The column started before daylight next day, August 18. A reinforced troop of the Reconnaissance Squadron was sent north through Draguignan with instructions to proceed toward North Castellane and develop the enemy situation. This troop, the first scheduled to start, cleared Draguignan without delay and the route clear for the main body. The 36th Division had occupied the town the day before. Having watched the efforts of the 142 Infantry the previous day to break through the north portion of the town's outskirts, I was prepared to hear of early trouble from this direction.

Remaining elements cleared their bivouacs on schedule and the main column appeared to be rolling. No report came over the command net and as I bowed along a clear road to catch the advance guard of the column, the sun rose and this seemed, after all, to be the sort of expedition we wanted it to be—a race.

Joy was short-lived. On the western outskirts of Draguignan I began to run into a stalled column. What was the difficulty? The commanding officer of the Reconnaissance Squadron, Lieutenant Colonel Charles J. Hodge, was soon found in his radio command car. The point was held up at the first bridge out of town. The surging troops had set up a mud block at the bridge, and this little obstruction had to be removed before the "charging" troops could advance! And what a block it was! It took a half hour's feverish work to clear a lane. The 36th's Ad just take a chance. The bonestee itself (were we in Ireland) could not have come in to disturb the sleep of the lads from Texas. As minutes passed and as good time slipped by, I became concerned and went to the bridge myself, and with my own eyes saw the friendly obstacle that held up our progress. There must have been two hundred pounds of TNT in that little bridge—not to mention antitank mines, posts, tiles, boulders, and cable! Oh, it was a masterpiece but very disconcerting in the early morning—under the circumstances, and especially after precaution had been taken to post the 36th Division on the plan and ask their cooperation in clearing our columns through the outposts. But those things happen even in a well-ordered war.

I remained on the scene, fuming, frettling, and belaughering, until I saw the lead vehicle underway. I then got off the road to check the column past and join my squadron leader at his radio car—the nerve center of the whole command—as it came along. But soon vehicles ceased to move. I hurried back to the unfortunate colonel's scout car and very quickly and pointedly brought up the question of the stalled column. "But the column is moving, sir." Well, I knew more of the movement—and lack of it—than the radio had disclosed to the CP.

"What of Troop C—the flank column?"

"Sir, they report their head clear of the outpost but held up by AT fire. They are sending out destroyers, patrols and placing the attached guns in position!"

Well, I hadn't expected much progress from element but was concerned over the slowness of the main column. We needed progress to get at the secondary roads ahead of us so that the Reconnaissance Squadron could fan out. Then we would make later time. And it was necessary to clear a certain junction north of Draguignan by 8:30 a.m. A report of the 45th Division was to follow us and I guarded General Tuscott that, barring enemy action, this would be done.

Radio communication was perfect. The head of the column was moving again, but obviously with too much caution. My poor young colonel had a very trying quarter-of-an-hour while I stayed at his still stationary radio car. Leaving interim instructions with him, I made for the head of the column to give the 5th command a few simple fundamentals in methodical but bold rapid advance. The 17th was a young unit, having had only limited experience in Italy and never confronted with a wide open situation like this offered to be.

Things began to move a bit better. I made my way back down into town once more. The squadron half columns had advanced some but was stopped again.

Once more I started for the head of the column. It had progressed not more than a mile when my attention was attracted by a madly careening screeching jeep coming up behind me. It was Hodge madly waving and shouting.

I stopped. He stopped. With the restraint and on purpose of a young actor, and making every effort to be military—but unconcerned—Hodge reported that Troop C on the right had broken through the resistance earlier reported, had taken prisoners and equipment, including one corps headquarters complete with one hundred general, his pistol, brandy and stuff! The (German LXI) corps commander, Lieutenant General Fels und Neurling, was under escort back to the square a Draguignan to be held there for formal surrender to a general officer. Naturally there was no word as to the cache of brandy that had been taken!

This set up young Hodge. His troop really had done a job, had succeeded where the infantry had failed.

Going back into Draguignan, I met my first German general, after close association with the German army since December of 1942. He was seated on a park bench having a nice quiet dignified ween. With the general was his orderly, general's suitcase in hand. They were in the custody of a cavalry corporal from Troop C and surrounding the pair was a circle of mounted tanks whose column had moved into but not yet through the town. These tanks were haggling about the excited mob of French villagers. The old general was a fatherly appearing soul and I have often wondered the cause of his tears—whether it was grief, disappointment, or living fear of the howling mob.
As kindly as was the general’s appearance, I take it that he was something of a Hun in his dealings with the populace—and how they were calling for his blood.
I had met with a French lieutenant as interpreter. This officer, in addition to speaking English, spoke some German; he was Jewish. The LXII Corps commander rose on my approach and enquired me a military salute, holding his salute until I returned it. The German army had ceased the “Heil Hitler” business. Receiving the surrender and making some statement as to the fight the general’s troops had made, I informed the prisoner that I was sending him under officer escort to my corps command, and thereupon our new acquisition embarked upon his first jeep ride under the chaperonage of a Frenchman—furthermore, and of Jewish background.

Ridding myself of our prize package, I hastened up to the advance guard and now the whole column was rolling—but the head was beginning to falter. Things were beginning to click, however. Hodge was able to give me the picture. The artillery battalion’s cube plane had gotten up and was giving the point aerial reconnaissance. The cube had spotted a demolished bridge, had reconnoitered a by-pass through some hills to the north and the only delay experienced was that caused by the narrow winding road. The radio nets that had been set up in our planning back in Naples and on shipboard were working.

By making our detour we by-passed a village into which a small German delaying force had just moved. The French reported this but our column could proceed with full confidence. On the march and I received from the Maquis to handle the situation, which they did. These stalwart sons of France, and sons of the Blue Devils, the Chasseurs Alpins of World War I fame, proved invaluable to us. They reinforced theeger infantry in critical situations and guarded our line of rear. These splendid partisans had carried on literally bare-handed since 1940 and only recently had been armed and organized by the United States and England by means of personnel and matériel parachuted in to them. This business of building up the Maquis had developed quite an organization. As indicated earlier, prior to our departure for France I had secured from the Seventh Army officers of this Maquis contact organization to accompany my column and assist in directing Maquis assistance to my effort. As a commentary on this underground organization, it must be recounted that word of the German had gone on ahead and our advance was eagerly awaited, but so well controlled was the information that the Germans always were in complete ignorance of our moves. It is only fair to state that without the Maquis our mission would have been far more difficult, if indeed not possible. And contrariwise, the presence of our arms and guns added immeasurably to the strength and assurance of the Maquis.

I noticed here the same French reaction to armor that had impressed me in the early days in Tunisia. At one period during that campaign I commanded an international force in the defense of Cape. The French under my command were terrifically affected with ‘tank-itis.’ The German armor in France in 1940 had impressed the French Army, the French nation, the French Empire. With this phobia (more than fact) went the conviction that French arms possessed not a single weapon to combat t. tank. And at this stage anything that chugged on wheels was a ‘tank’ to a Frenchman.

Contrariwise their morale went sky high when anything “anti-char” was produced. In Africa I issued my French batteries high velocity 75mm ammunition with which they felt perfectly confident. Even our little 37s were regarded as absolute and absolutely before manufactured anti-tank guns gave them confidence. A French soldier with confidence is the equal of any soldier in the world. And so with the Maquis. Our heavy tanks, our artillery and our self-propelled anti-tank guns sent the guerrillas into ecstasy. And how the Germans dreaded the fierce Maquis!

The German dread of the Maquis came to the surface continuously during our race into the interior. Really, some of our adventurous young officers became quite persuasive salesmen. Many and many a garrison was taken after a few shots—an American advanced under a white flag, and a parley. If the German commander could be convinced that he and his force would become American prisoners and not be turned over to the French, surrender usually was accomplished forthwith. Occasionally it took a little additional goading on our part. So in no instance did the Germans ever violate our white flag or the “negotiation.”

Later when skirmishes and rapid advances piled the two armies together in the Battle of Montelimar, this mutually pleasant process of war naturally gave way to killing and torture. And with this turn in the battle died a fearless officer and forceful conversationalist, Captain Omer F. Brown, the commander of the anti-tank gun troop of the Reconnaissance Squadron. He was killed along the banks of the Rhone near Grenoble when his gun made a valiant stand against a determined tank attack by an element of the 11th German Panzer Division.

The work that the little cube planes did for us was as remarkable as any this little brave unit of U.S. Army did amongst all its unbelievable exploits. How or why the cube plane survived will ever be a mystery to me. Of course their principal mission was artillery observation and as an infantryman I soon learned that they brought us double comfort. They directed fire—but best of all they kept down enemy fire merely by being in the air. German gun and mortar crews lay ‘doggy’ when the little fellows were on the prowl. The smart gun crew knew that a battery seen was a battery destroyed when a “Meyring Bomber” was aloft.

In planning my force I included a liaison plane from the Corps pool of L-5s. I felt such a craft would help me. I had used the equivalent of one early in
Event: Gap, France
Date: 20 August 1944

Location with Preface: On 20 August 1944 Troop A supported by Troop B (assault guns) departed the Squadron assembly area in the vicinity of Sisteron and headed northeast to Gap with a mission to pick up small groups of Maquis on the way and attack at 1700 hours. Upon arrival on the high ground overlooking the town of Gap, Troop B assault guns knocked out the radio tower on the first shot. Next Troop A moved to the edge of Gap with a platoon of light tanks. The Maqui force was sent to the flanks and rear of Gap.

Captain Omer Brown indicated to me that he would be willing to seek surrender of the German Garrison at Gap. This act, if successful, would eliminate many causalities. I agreed and called Squadron to put off the attack until 1800 hours. Squadron approved. Capt. Brown was off with jeep, driver of a french gendarm with white flag for the town city hall.

During the discussion with the German Garrison commander, Capt. Brown explained that his force was surrounded. He outbluffed the German. The result was about 1100 prisoners. This negotiation between Brown and the german Commander was touch and go. Finally the surrender was accomplished. Lives were saved that day. It would have been bloody. The community of Gap was probably around 10,000. Many of these people would have suffered.

Captain Omer Brown made it possible and deserves to be recognized for his initiative, imagination, calmness and above all his great courage. He was a very brave man. Sometime later in another combat operation he was killed in action.

Personal observations by Captain Thomas C. Piddington, Commanding Officer, Troop A, 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mechanized).

Signed: Thomas C. Piddington
Captain 0425249
turn them over to the French. But when my young crusaders developed their hidden forensic powers and the sight of the bloody vagina dig set down a petition of surrender that stipulated that the Reichswehr was to be board from the U.S.A., my plans were up the nigth. However, we had to sweep on. Mqaus was involved in a plot and I was informed that an American commission officer would command the prison guard of French. We just could not stop nor could we set up FW envelopes all along extending route. There were no provost marshals left on the scene.

The decision to stop at Riez was a happy one. No sooner were we off the roads than a flight of German bombers with fighter escort was over us. No sign of us did they see and we continued on to the beaches for a boating trip was costly to the elements still in process of landing. By now the Germans were panicky. Before we got to the Riez telephone exchange the mayor had a call from the German headquarters at Digne—just 12 miles away. The General had heard rumors of Americans coming north from Draguignan. "Was it true?" Communications were cut everywhere. These Mqaus had a story to taint its name and no referrals there, but "take heed!" Apparently the mayor's report satisfied our neighbor for not a single German patrol came near an outpost that night. But "those Mqaus" did not seem to matter on the provost. They stayed locked up in their barracks.

The arrangements that had been set up for Mqaus contact were working. Soon there was a daily schedule for these authenticated. The sending for instructions were kept as brief as possible. They were dropped off here and knocked out two German self-propelled guns to boot. I had promised my little tank patrol that the infantry would be out to relieve them by dark, and a motored combat team of the 45th Division marched into Draguignan in a way our force had cleared. The infantry arrived none too soon for our small force was in serious trouble. It was running out of ammunition and with the coming of darkness was working out of town in force. Bajrlos was building up. The 45th made a brilliant fight there and for two days a full scale trap reeled before the Germans would fold even though out of cover and surrounded.

By the time reports by radio came in from Bajrlos that first evening, from constant reports from the east and from information picked up from the Mqaus, we had the intelligence of an outline of the probable situation confronting me. Accordingly I called in Troop C from the east instructing them to leave an outpost about Amups, some 10 miles north of Digne, until the 3rd Division moved over to turn the pressure over to the infantry. Our force being as small as it was I anticipated that I could not spare a man for prisoner-of-war care. The pre-jump instruction for this anticipated situation was simple. All units were instructed to interrogate prisoners by sampling and then

where some "several" hundred Germans were quartered.

The Mqaus under my hardy paratroop captain also were in a state of establishing and defending a small block on the Riez opposite to an impregnable position southeast of Digne. It would be embarrassing a Germans from the south poked into our little Battle of Digne. It was not much.

To contact with Corps was out and we were unable to pick up any German traffic. It was a little spooky that dark night and even "Sally and George" who had become our radio friends at Anzio would have been reassuring. Oh, for Bill Marlowe!

In order that the Corps would have full information on the events of the day and be cognizant of plans for the future I dispatched an officer courier to report in person to General Truscott at the same timehoping that on his return to me, my courier would bring the Corps situation and future plans. Also, could he please feed our engineers? So off went my courier in the dark, without light—and without the foggiest notion as to where Corps could be found. My lad found Corps, the staff protected the General's rest, my report was rendered and my courier returned without information among the engineers. Best news of the night was the arrival of our supply column and the precious gas!

I had gambled on the first refill the supply column carried. Each tank was loaded on the combat vehicles and we started out with an overload of ammunition. Therefore that first day nothing but gasoline was carried in the supply column and well it was. We had plenty of food, ammunition expenditures had been light and we still had basic loads. Next day it might be different. Organic supply vehicles dumped their loads and went back to the beach to have our ammunition be shunted up against an emergency. No rest for the drivers.

All roads were active during the night and the outlook after dawn was for anyone approaching an outpost from the enemy side was carried immediately to headquarters. In every case where tanks were thus picked up they proved to be Mqaus bringing valuable information. No person was allowed to pass outward through our outposts unless passed by force headquarters and there were no persons picked up under this control.

To night and by now the prospects of the venture were in everyone's blood. But patrols had worked forward towards Digne and with first light the reinforced Troop was off on its mission to hit early and hit hard. The Mqaus were at the appointed assembly areas.

At daybreak the advance guard of the main body advanced out of the Orson-Orion stretch. Troop moved out to the south. The main body, consisting of the three tanks, artillery and tank destroyers, was prepared for instant start and held in their bivouac. I was in my own country only it was a long long way over land terrain and weather were all with which I had to concern myself. The weather was fine—warm but not hot. The country was well suited for armored action cross country. The enemy had been howled by surprise and was proving not too rough. This was war de luxe and we had not yet had a casualty. (To be continued)

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**Armored Cavalry Journal**
Part Two of a story covering the operations of a provisional armored cavalry unit in exploiting the invasion of southern France

My plan was to move the Force by boats—the cavalry scouting, advancing, securing, and the heavy column running for it when the selected area was covered. That kept us on the road a minimum of time, saved gas and provided better insurance against enemy air observation. The first boat would take us to Oraison. The second boat would be to Sisteron itself. From there we could be ported, if necessary, or, if trouble came ahead, the weight could be thrown towards Sisteron, the day’s objective.

Troop B, on route to Digne, reported resistance. Advance elements had been in town but had driven small arms fire and withdrew. The Germans had thrown no artillery, tank or mortar fire. Scout cars and trucks were pouring machine-gun fire into the town. The Maquis attack had broken down but was reforming. Another push would go in at noon.

Troop A, pushing ahead on Sisteron reached the bridge across the Durance at Brillans and secured it. The bridge had been captured by the German armored cars. The river was, in fact, a formidable obstacle and it was the bridge—or else. Our engineers were still unprepared, and anyway, the river would have been too much for them. So the bridge the German tanks had crossed, the tank that had crossed the western bank of the Durance proceeded to the outskirts of Casteau Amour and ran into trouble. There was no main body in the vicinity of Oraison. It was accomplished with only the mad enthusiasm of a French populace impelling progress. They arched blocked roads and streets, showering the twinkling fruit, flowers and wine. Discipline as to the latter and the men were temperate to an exemplary degree.

When I say “shower” in connection with the axes I mean just that. The effective Latin spirit led to a more precipitate than wise. Did you ever try to catch an apple tossed to you as you drove by at even the moderate pace of fifteen miles an hour? Or did you ever cut a tomato square in the face driving down the street?

These pleasant demonstrations added up to a cool delay. Some vehicles still were on the road when plane came overhead. We could see they were ours—they were two—one and we counted. There was an air-lieutenant, radio and all, with us. We could hear the pilots talking to each other when they spotted our vehicles. Unfortunately, and tragically, our group was not weighed down by discussions to be Debussy could not bear to talk. The pilots were a gillip pair, one was for peeling off immediately. The other said he couldn’t see the markings and maybe they were Arnav myths. He insisted in the farm on reaching Sisteron—our goal for the moment—instead of six at a gorgeous late summer evening. Patrols and outposts were set. Troop C fanned out to the north and southwest, covering us from Bonan and Saint-Etienne-Ouges.

The fate of Digne having been settled, the remaining elements of the Force moved from Oraison to the south to exploit the opportunity caused by the capture of the divisional area command by the French. The vehicle and thirteen good American youths.

But what about our little horses with the enemy Digne was going again but still tough. Prisoners were taken all along the divisional area command to a mere brigadier general. We were slipping: by this time yesterday we had a lieutenant general complete with staff. However, stout the resistance, small arms fire was not effective, no machine guns. All the enemy was showing. Grenades thrown from upper floor windows somewhat restrict the effectiveness of fire.

Just before dusk, August 19, a liaison plane came in and landed. It was our plane from Corps—the first seen in two days. I thoroughly expected some instructions and, most of all, maps. It was a relief to find that my orders were to proceed to Sisteron and from there be prepared to move either to the west or north. Well, here I was and every one was raring to go. The air courier had a note for me from General Truscott, written the night before, apparently after my courier had reached Corps, but of this no mention was made. Truscott had the impression I intended to by-pass Digne. Well, Digne was in the bag but I could not tell him as much as I wanted. I had no communications yet. I kept the plane with me overnight for I might have use for it in the morning.

For security of our line of communication I depended on the Maquis, and my group from Army who were Maquis “specialists” were on the jump morning, noon and night. How effective my L of C defense would have been I do not know. I am thankful it was never put to test. But I could afford no other and my supply support continued as follows:

An outstanding individual in the Force was Major James G. Haxton, the supply officer. For two days he worked miracles and for days to come he would continue doing the same with little to give him hand. Even at Sisteron, 90 miles from our jump-off, we were 125 miles from the dumps and Haxton was on the road continuously. He secured one of the two decorations I was able to give to the boys. He was awarded an officer who under fire and with extreme danger to himself rescued a wounded soldier from an exposed position.

The Reconnaissance Squadron was now a veteran unit and I doubt if any other unit of its type found a job better suited to its organization and equipment than the mission in hand. This is what Reconnaissance Squads were designed for and for this they were a superb unit. I believed the 17th Armored Division to be the best in the world and I believe that every soldier that served in it was a man to be proud of. The Reconnaissance Squadrons was now a veteran unit and I doubt if any other unit of its type found a job better suited to its organization and equipment than the mission in hand. This is what Reconnaissance Squads were designed for and for this they were a superb unit. I believed the 17th Armored Division to be the best in the world and I believe that every soldier that served in it was a man to be proud of. The Reconnaissance Squadrons was now a veteran unit and I doubt if any other unit of its type found a job better suited to its organization and equipment than the mission in hand. This is what Reconnaissance Squads were designed for and for this they were a superb unit. I believed the 17th Armored Division to be the best in the world and I believe that every soldier that served in it was a man to be proud of. The Reconnaissance Squadrons was now a veteran unit and I doubt if any other unit of its type found a job better suited to its organization and equipment than the mission in hand. This is what Reconnaissance Squads were designed for and for this they were a superb unit. I believed the 17th Armored Division to be the best in the world and I believe that every soldier that served in it was a man to be proud of. The Reconnaissance Squadrons was now a veteran unit and I doubt if any other unit of its type found a job better suited to its organization and equipment than the mission in hand. This is what Reconnaissance Squads were designed for and for this they were a superb unit. I believed the 17th Armored Division to be the best in the world and I believe that every soldier that served in it was a man to be proud of.
ing, late of the LXII German Army Corps. The wife and daughter of the estate joined us. These brave ladies were running the farm as the husband-father was absent in Germany. So many times we encountered this situation. Sometimes the absent one had become a prisoner of war in 1940, sometimes it had been a mere case of kidnapping or imprisonment during the intervening years. I would like someday to tour that beautiful country and revisit the. I hope, reunited families who befriended us and to many of our aviators who had been forced to land here before liberation.

We began to pick up these stranded flyers about this time and it has always been a regret that we could not have done more for them. The press of getting on ahead and maintaining the integrity of the Force was paramount and consumed our every thought and our full time and energy. We could feed these folk, however, and evacuate them, but that was about all. On the whole, the men were in good condition, the French having done a splendid job caring for and protecting them. As for the French themselves, in this section they were well nourished and reasonably well clothed but distraught with anguish, both personal and national.

Our second night in turn was quiet. Our high-powered radio from Corps arrived and we were in contact—and I was reporting every two hours. The traffic was all one way, except for the message that told me some of my patrols yesterday morning had been overly cautious. The aviator who made this report was the one who had just arrived and when I showed him this message he was very sheepish and full of stammers. I let it go at that. He was an intelligent young man and one lesson was enough.

I was desperate for instructions. It might be disastrous for a force such as mine to just sit, deep in enemy territory. I turned in after midnight without receiving the message I thought must come at any moment. Information of enemy dispositions kept building up. There was an outpost south of Grenoble. There was a mobile force in or about Grenoble. There was a large garrison—"many hundred," in Gap. Which way was I to go? I wanted to get there.

Before turning in I made arrangements for my operations officer, Major Kermit H. Hansen of Omaha, to take off at first light, shortly after five, in the liaison plane for Corps. If by that time no word had come as to our future movements. Promptly at five the efficient and dependable Hansen woke me and told me nothing had come in from Corps. He and my aviator friend were off in a jiffy. I figured that with good luck Hansen could be back from Corps by ten but evaluating all factors involving travel and a Corps Headquarters, I really did expect him back until noon. However, I did anticipate that his visit might produce radio orders that would reach me sooner.

In the meantime, orders or no orders, there was work to be done. The artillery cub spotted some German
wound a short distance, and called for fire. By ar-
range, forty rounds of 105 HE were fired at the bar-
der, and the garrison was told that was all.
White flags appeared all over. Brown went in
and accepted the surrender—and then pandemonium
broke. The French were hysterical.

The denouement of this happening without my
knowledge. I maintained headquarters back in Sisteron
waiting for a radio from Corps or at least Hansen's re-
turn. No radio came, one o'clock, twelve o'clock,
came, and the garrison was notified the Americans
were on their way and asked if Hansen had arrived. I never did get a reply
to that query. Wood came in from the Gap force that
the outpost had been overrun and that the elements
were deploying back to the town—and that the firing
of the remainder (and by now major ele-
ment) of the Force to be prepared to move to Apres-
seur-Beche and took off for Gap myself.

If we were to go north, it would be much farther
away. And so we went into the Rhone, we had now
determined that the only practicable route was westward
from Apreseur. Further, through our supply grapevine
we had a rumor that part of the 36th Division was begin-
ing to move up behind us, so therefore a move to
Apreseur seemed the play.

I could not account for Hansen's failure to return. I
feared that the plane had crashed. Leaving the CP en-
route to our new position, I continued to move among the
36th. On the road I met the Assistant Division Com-
mander, Brigadier General Robert I. Stack, who was in
an uproar. On the basis of the report I had had via my
guardsman, I was pretty sure Stack would be at the center
of the road traffic other than traffic for a certain point if
road closure could be established. Under the exist-
ing conditions I had to have freedom of movement on the
to roads. Two elements do not make a team, especially
in armor. General Stack was terribly upset be-
cause his column had been held up. His column was
some six jeeps of stuff, I was greatly pleased to hear
that a combat team was following me. I was pleased
by the combat team was following me. I was pleased
that the most welcome, in fact, the only, news of our side that I had had
in days. I explained the situation to Stack and asked him what
his orders were. "To go to Grenoble," he said. I ex-
plained that we had orders to go to Sisteron. I told
Stack I envied him the definiteness of his mission. I
could not account for his having received definite in-
nuction hours ago while I was only indirectly under the
pass as soon as the sun was up, and I was
not safe, sure. I was holding the bag.

Pushing off towards Aspre and Gap, I was soon
pursued by an L-5, our liaison plane. I could not see the
faces but Hansen spotted me on the road and said "Take care, says he. But he had
no mission for us.

Shortly after this my radio picked up a report from
Gap. The town had capitulated and we took 150 prisoners.
I understood that the German com-
mander was obligated to take prisoners to all outposts and
deliver them. This he did. Reaching Aspre I turned
in the column's instructions. to set up a CP then
and move the element of the force still at Sisteron up to Aspre. Yes, the engineers were now up too.

Desperately my order to proceed to Sisteron and then
await further orders, I had my force more dispersed
now than it ever had been during the previous two days
of the campaign. However, I believe it would have been
useful to have had Col de la Couture to the German for the taking, and, equally, if
it would have been foolhardy to let word slip to the
Germans in Gap to so that they could organize them-
tively. If this were unsatisfactory to Corps, I was no
longer in a position to take part in this thing.

When I reached Gap, I saw immediately why the
radio had remained silent. The attacking force was
swamped and beside itself organizing the prisoners,
extracting itself from the population, which literally
had gone mad. I got more infantry in as quickly as
I could. By midnight order was restored and our output
had been established with dependable communication functioning all round.

Earlier in the day I had received a French officer,
Colonel Saint Saviour at my CP at Sisteron. Officers
of the old French Army were coming in now and the
alacrity of the officers was invaluable. I asked the
same to my CP at Apreseur late the same night and,
assuming a continued advance to the North
he made all advance arrangements through the Major
underground. He also overtook the CP of my self,
the larger CP as the 2nd Armored and the 1st Armored,
order was restored. It was not our function or mission to keep order
in France, but for security and for free movement we
were much better off that way.

My men were thoroughly familiar with the country and very much concerned over the
Bayard north of Gap. We had not pushed out that
after taking Gap. I really felt that this was sound
idea for the French to be displaced by moving me closer in,
I hated to disperse any part of my small force that
much. There was the off chance too that my friend might
just be a bit on the side of shadily seeming. As previously
stated, if one were to act on his instincts and\he was, he always tended to act
at times. I didn't dare to go that far.

We were secure. What would we miss? What
about the pass north of Gap? Was the enemy
forcing south of Grenoble? The last radio chip
reported another attack and a new day showing
the calendar, I turned in.

About four o'clock in the morning Colonel The-
dore J. Conway of VI Corps Headquarters arrived
with General Eisenhower's instructions. We went straight
west to be the heights above Mont-
lair after all, and at this moment of disper-
sement, the feeling of the railroad, the
German line of retreat, runs north through the narrow
valley to Courcelles to Lorgil near the influx of the
Durance and the Drac. From here the square
and that toward the northeast and Chorges on the Rhone.
The hills near the center of the road junction of Mac-
zone is connected with Highway 7 by Conflans Pass.

This was shown on the maps. The Massane
route would take us to the outskirts of Mont-
lair. Thus the screen through the villages of Sa-
none-Confolan-Mirande was forming, behind which
the rest of the force was moving. Below the
the Massane 7 Germans followed the light
ships and armored cars immediately into action,
the confusion of the enemy as well as the destruction
acted was indescribable. Enemy German planes
took off over the next few miles in the
fire. During the next day the rest of the
Troop B was forced to break and retreat, but
it before it had done mortal damage.

The next troop from 2nd Armored, Troop C, was
pushed into light through Crete along the north bank of the
The column reached the bridge near the mouth
of the river, to find it blown, but observed an enemy
column crossing by ford lower down, but that
the conflict was intense.

A plan of the German
Troop C and with all guns firing, this column destroyed
set off over fifty vehicles. What the German
passion losses were never established. Here again the
reconnaissance is necessary to con-
front the Troop for effective outpost duty in pro-
jecting our right flank.

The bulk of the infantry battalion, the artillery and
the engineers followed closely and were
positioned in position to cover the Conflans Pass, west
of Montlaimon. This was my point of strength and
through this pass I expected to cut the main highway.

That first night we did cut through. We were unable to
sand follow the black. After that fight we fell back onto
the pass, but the enemy was held at bay. This
occurred for two days. We just did not have the
strength to force and hold and we were to be
obliged to drive away the bases above the
broach, which was thus always under our\aimed.

Dark was closing in on this fourth day of our
mission, and with darkness there was no respite in our
reluctance. On the move at the Mar-
ning, my own small staff was completely
occupied. As I was, I confounded over the
invasion dispositions at Conflans and the plans there for
the night. The headquarters had shown extreme judgment
in picking our CP's to date so I instructed the Squad
commander to have selected a position for the night.

When time finally came for me to "home" to the CP,
my heart sank and I sank as I drove on in the dark
and followed my direction by the stars. As my heart went
down, my blood pressure was too high, so in the absence of an executive, the senior present, how
long it would take to move the CP. "Forty-five minutes,
Sir," he replied. "You'll be out of here in ten," I said,
and out they were. The look on the officer's face was
the severity and the less he had
the tactical judgment. He had picked out for our head-
quarters an ideal position for a key element in our out-
post system.

In fact the most of the 117th closed in on us from Gap that
night but the tanks and tank destroyers had been so
delayed by the slowness of the 36th the making of the
results that they did not make it—and when they did, it was
also too late.

I still was shy of some of my precious few infantry, a
plan in a large company that left behind in the Gap area. There be-
ing no engineer work in hand other than road demolitions
which the men themselves would handle.

I attached this engineer company that night to the in-
fantry battalion. This was the first experience these
men had had near or under fire and it was indeed their
first exposure to enemy contact. It was a sad night. The
men of my own back fever they shot themselves up and suffered more casualties than the
infantry. However, as American troops will, the unit
survived to eventually accomplish first race work
in the sector.

In a note I received from General Truscott, in ad-
inclusion to giving my mission of seizing the high
ground north of Montelimar, he told me that my ac-
defense work was equally urgent and important.
Generals that an armed division, or at least a major
portion of an armed division, was operating in their
rear. This I believe I did for in the next days the enemy
reaction was fierce but it was not my job to provide
strength to that of an armed division
calls for many processes of arithmetic—ratio of men,
rate of tanks, ratio of guns, and ratio of guns to men
to tanks. Off-hand I would say I was available to
4 to 5% of the fighting strength of an armed division

There was a vast difference between getting an
advance guard of light, fast-moving armors into an enemy strong
hold, as the American infantry did, and
the Germans that an armed division, or at least a major
portion of an armed division, was operating in their
rear. This I believe I did for in the next days the enemy
reaction was fierce but it was not my job to provide
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rate of tanks, ratio of guns, and ratio of guns to men
to tanks. Off-hand I would say I was available to
4 to 5% of the fighting strength of an armed division

The German is a bit earlier. By the time the American
Armadillo of the 117th was to be an experienced veteran.
Where there was the will, he reacted quickly, soundly
and effectively to an emergency. When he acted
there was no belly to pay. This, many high and long
serving American commanders never knew, appreciated,
morning were two railway artillery trains. And what show these trains put on as cars burned and an explosion blew up. I always wanted to see what was left on the tracks where these trains stood but never had an opportunity to satisfy my curiosity.

The Germans were probing everywhere. Early in the afternoon we got a real scare. Five Mark Vs supported by panzer grenadiers succeeded in crossing the Roubion near Cleon. Troop A fought skillfully, knocking out several of the supporting vehicles, but became cut off and surrounded. The German Division worked into Puy St. Martin, where Felber had his head quarters. This was the time and place to use my enemy and, anticipating enemy power in this area, this was the location I had picked out from which the reserve to operate. But the slowness of the relief at Gap had delayed this vital element of the command. It still was the road. The tank destroyers that Felber had did excellent work and stemmed the advance. More power was needed. One platoon of Troop A still was stuck and had lost two armored cars and three jeeps. Due to the hilly nature of the country we could not raise an advancing column by radio. Its commanding officer had driven on ahead and was at the CP. Now the Germans were between us and his troops. He estimated the column could not be more than thirty minutes from the point where they would contact the enemy. Fortunately, an air controller was on the scene. By telephone an order was given to destroy the infantry. Our commanding officer was relieved. The orders had been in the hands of the enemy. Enemy identification in this encounter showed we were up against the 11th Panzer Division. As "Sill and George," the German commanders of Amorici, would say, "Danger Ahead!" The 11th proved to be very tough cookies here and on several later occasions on the VI Corps route to Germany.

When this situation was in hand, I sent for my artillery commander to determine his ammunition status. He quoted me a stock of around sixty rounds per gun. This was much lower than had been indicated to me earlier. I thereupon set a reserve of fifty rounds per gun to be used on my clearance only. Just to add a sense of security, half an hour later, Major McLean, the artillery commander, reappraised with the information that a gun by gun check showed 25 rounds per gun on hand! Fite had crossed the 105s and was running short. Already Harlow was concentrating ammunition, but how soon would it arrive?

Closer to Montelimar Troop B had had a lively time with German patrols piking at it incessantly, were turned back without too much penetration. An unaccompanied enemy tank broke into the rear area, but no crews survived to return. More 11th Panzer B
1948

**TASK FORCE BUTLER: PART II**

nightfall the sector was still intact, but what of the mor-
row?

Troop C, protecting the north flank along the Drome
now the complete Assault Gun Troop with it and
enjoyed the shot of the day. The 105's were deliver-
aiming fire at enemy columns west of Lortol and
at a range of 2500 yards. Firing high angle and accu-
phosphorus rounds for hundreds of vehicles
setting them ablaze and sending occupants scram-
ning. The armored cars of the troop were closer in
and further disheartened the dismounted enemy.
According to General Butler's machine-
gun fire. This time I was confident I could not be
artillery firing until ammunition
up. During the night the resup-
ply finally arrived the artillery interdi-
tion of the front across the Drome and the entrance to the eastern point. Numerous fires
indicated the continued bombardment was getting results.

The night was reasonably quiet and nothing tran-
spired to lead to a crisis. By now, however, the troops
were tiring. This was not the case for the eighth
day of continuous movement for the troops. True, much of
the time had been mere riding. There was the exhaus-
tion of accomplishment and advance which serves as a
stimulant of incomparable efficiency. It was a tired soldier.
Troops can be worn down by a prolonged, wither-
ing fight. The long, gaunt faces will appear. The eyes
will begin to pop. But make a breakthrough and spirit
and the most tired will be in the van. It is a remarkable
human reaction.

Be that as it may, the men were beginning to show
the effects of the strain. The morale was high. There
never was a thought of giving an inch of ground. Had
not every enemy thrust been turned back? Tails were
up in the air.

Then, too, the "high command" was feeling better.
Or, at least, the whole Corps was in hand. Thanks to
the artillery barrage we had wireless connection to
all major units. Further, I was confident that on the
morning of the 19th I would receive a regiment of the 36th.
Some-
where or other this regiment, the 141st Infantry, was in
Gernoble and was doubling back to me immediately.

Incidentally, the trip of this regiment from Gern-
obiel to Lortol surprised me of those things that can hap-
pen in war. The regiment's route practically paralleled
the route of the retreating Germans and passed within
a gun shot of an airfield which was not controlled by
the enemy. For two days our patrols had been
being fired at, and with noteworthy
success! Ignorance is bliss and down came the 36th
contingent in our lines without an incident.

We were to see them the next day. I expected an
attack and had held both of my critical outposts, if
not in all three. We knew the enemy was very inter-
ested in our extreme left flank. If he could break
through there and cut us off, then the Gernoble sector
was in danger. After Troop C's execution yesterday
at Lortol I expected trouble there.

The first action of the day came to our left flank in
the vicinity of Clean Troop C was hit and fell to it
about 200 Maquis. This is the sector in which the 11th
Panzer Division struck their first attack. Today we were better
organized and had our full force. The attack was spotted
before it reached the Roubion and broken up somewhat
by artillery fire. What was left of the German infantry,
up by tanks and tank destroyers. It was a short fight.
Good communications were in, and the Panzers took
a shellacking.

While this fight was brewing, Colonel John W.
Harmony of the 36th Division arrived and reported his
armored column approaching Crest. I immediately gave him
his dispositions. I wanted extra strength on the north
flank and instructed him to attack his column to
the west of the river and send a
combat team to command this sector. One rifle battalion
I directed to seize and hold the high ground south of
Condillac and physically block the main highways. With
this accomplishment, the 36th would be to launch a
attack to drive the German defenses back into Montelimar and occupy command-
ground immediately covering the town and its
northern exis.

During the morning the 36th Division Headquarters
moved on. This very situation had been envisioned
by General Transcou before left the beachhead and
in the event things worked out as expected, these
would be the men of the 36th. Major General John E. Dahlquist, the commander of the 36th
arrived with just such instructions. However, he asked
me to continue direction of the action until I left the
day while he was吸收ing the situation and getting
organized. I explained my plan and he asked for no
changes.

Late in the afternoon, after the Division had taken
over, I made a round of all the battalions and watched
from within closely as the battle attempting to al-
locate as much assistance as I could on Montelimar. I had been misled as to the
location of the battalion, and found the attack was badly
organized and poorly led. It looked to me that the
attack had been made directly into a German advance in this sector. The situation
was badly involved, with the Germans in my judgment
had the better of it. The 141st Infantry
beaten into the cavalry sector and the only time our
patrols were intact and fighting well. My im-
mediate recommendation to General Dahlquist was that
the attack be stopped, the infantry reinforced, and
the cavalry screened out of their position, and the cavalry screen be
in the van on their position, and the cavalry screen be
in the middle of the infantry. This he approved.

The real story of the Force ends with the assump-
tion of command by the 36th Division. The mission of the
command was to advance southwest and to stop and
secure the Montelimar crossroad. After the 36th
headquarters was established along the road and
in the vicinity of Montelimar.

The old force continued to push ahead. It seemed
that everything was going according to plan. The
Germans were getting ready to give up the fight.

Individuals involved in actions at the Montelimar area.

1. 3rd Platoon, Lt. Rodaler, Platoon Leader, was cut off at
Charols and the platoon continued to fight in small piece meal
sections.

2. Sgt. Mike Aun, armored car section engaged a German armored
column of vehicles from a well selected, undetected position on
the right flank of the column. By superior marksmanship and
courage to stay his ground, he destroyed eighteen (18) enemy
vehicles. This helped me at the beginning to cause confusion among
the enemy forces facing Troop A, 117th Cavalry.

3. Lt. Herman, Half Track Leader, reported to me at my CP west
of Clean, France with enemy intelligence so important to the
force that he could bring his half track safely through the enemy lines,
used gallantly and foxed the enemy.

The direct result of this was to give us a chance to
attack the enemy and to make a stand in the north.

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that everything was going according to plan. The
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used gallantly and foxed the enemy.
Lt. Rodaler, Platoon Leader, was cut off from his scattered platoon after a sharp firefight but was able to work his way through German lines to my CP. He had been wounded as his face was filled with pieces of shrapnel and metal apparently from a potato masher type grenade. He wanted to return to the fray. Rodaler passed through the enemy lines again, and eventually assembled his whole platoon with very little loss of equipment and casualties. He was a very fine brave officer. Several months later he was killed in action.

2. 1st Platoon Lt. Ken Cronin, Platoon leader, was backed up near pont de Bône and defended a bridge. He was in a severe firefight and needed help. By his tenacity and courage he kept the enemy armored column at bay. I organized all my people in Troop Headquarters to assist him. Eventually I was able to get the Task Force to support him with a medium tank unit. However, by then Cronin had things in control. He did a superior job and showed great courage.

Sgt. Joe Poirier, Troop A, Supply Sergeant, was placed in charge of a provisional armored section (1 armored car, 2 jeeps, 1 half track) from the remnants of Troop A Headquarters. I stripped the entire CP keeping only my radios vehicles, and a maintenance half track with my 1st Sgt acting as executive officer. Poirier's mission was to join Lt. Cronin of the 1st Platoon and give him what support he could. On the way near Manus he ran into a large enemy armored column. With his small force he took cover in courtyard of a French type row house. Camouflaged his vehicles with anything available such as flower pots, etc. He relayed the count of enemy vehicles, crews, etc. This was greatly needed and helped us to further confuse the enemy. Sgt. Poirier reported personally to me dressed in a French cloth with black beret with detailed enemy information. He showed great initiative, imagination, judgment and courage. In the meantime the 1st Platoon received medium tank support.

2nd Platoon, Lt. Carl Ellison platoon Ellison was defending Cleon which was only a few miles south of the all important command post at Butler's Task Force and the 117th Cavalry HQ along with the Task Force's vital supply dumps. The platoon had engaged a mechanized enemy column attempting to enter the small town of Cleon. I personally observed Lt. Ellison with a mounted machine gun jeep dash up one street, fire at the approaching enemy, then switch to another street and do the same thing. He did this repeatedly. This caused considerable confusion to the enemy. Again, they thought we had a vast superior force. Eventually we gave Ellison 185 artillery support which interdicted the main enemy approach to Ellison position. His forward observation of the effect of the fire was superior. Again he served as an outstanding leader in all areas. He was a fine brave soldier. He had initiative and staying ability on the battlefield. There is no doubt in my mind that if Ellison failed to cause this superior enemy force to turn back that the Command Post and supply dumps would have been wiped out in a short period of time. Several months later he was killed in action, too.
SUBJECT: Recommendation for Unit Citation

TO: Commanding Officer
117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron
APO 760
c/o Postmaster
New York, N.Y.

1. It is desired by the undersigned that the necessary papers and documents be prepared for a Unit Citation for the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron for its participation in the operations of the so-called Task Force Butler. The necessary records are not available for this recommendation to be prepared locally and the request is made, therefore, that if favorably considered by the Commanding Officer of the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, recommendation and supporting papers be prepared in his Headquarters and forwarded to me for presentation to the War Department.

2. The recommendation should stress the bold aggressive reconnaissance that the squadron made, the long distances that it operated in small units behind the enemy's lines and the difficulties of supply and communication. It should be stressed further that the squadron supplied the communications and Headquarters control for the Task Force. A number of prisoners taken including special mention of the high ranking personnel captured should also be made. No hesitation should be made in the recommendation that the success of the operation is due largely to the aggressive action of the squadron.

3. It will be appreciated if I be supplied with the present address of Colonel Hedle in order that I may communicate with him for additional details and assistance when the requesting papers are received by me.

P.S. Branch
Brigadier General, USA
Deputy Commander
HEADQUARTERS

VI Corps
APO 48, U.S. Army

31 August 1944

To: Brig. Gen. F. B. Butler, Deputy Commander
Light Service Command,
Army Services Forces Training Center,
Camp Claiborne, Louisiana

Subject: Recommendation for Unit Citation

I, in pursuance of Army Regulations based upon your recommendations the enclosed documents and supporting maps are submitted for recommendation of a Unit Citation for the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mech.) for their actions in combat while participating as part of the "Butler Task Force" in the invasion of Southern France during the period 15-30 August 1944.

1. The 117th Cav. Ron. Sq., landed with the assault scholons of the 3rd, 36th, and 45th Infantry Divisions on the enemy held beaches of Southern France shortly after "H" Hour, 15th, August 1944. Upon completing the missions assigned to the various elements of the squadron, the unit was assembled in the vicinity of Le Muy, France, 17th, August 1944. Orders were received from VI Corps attaching the squadron to the Provisional Armor Group under command of Brig. Gen. F. B. Butler, Deputy Corps Commander. Utilizing the splendid radio facilities of the squadron, General Butler superimposed his small staff on that of the squadron staff for means of control, operations and communication both to higher and lower echelons.

2. Making full use of the capabilities of the light and fast armored reconnaissance units of the squadron, these patrols by their bold and aggressive actions, thoroughly disorganized and disrupted the enemy's communications and prevented any semblance of an orderly retreat or withdrawal. Soon outstripping its own lines of communication and supply the squadron, employing its tremendous fire power and extreme mobility combined with acute resourcefulness and daring of its leaders, soon overrun thousands of square miles of Southern France. Many towns and villages were liberated from the long years of the enemy's hold.

During the first day of operation of the Provisional Armor Group the squadron affected the capture of the Commanding General of the German IX Corps along with his entire staff. On the following day, the 18th, of August 1944, elements of the squadron seized another German General Officer.

The squadron penetrated more than 125 miles from the beach head in a few days. On the 20th of August, one troop of the squadron by bold and aggressive action forced the surrender of the entire garrison of 1500 enemy soldiers with its commanding officer in the town of Gap. The American force did not consist of more than 140 men and officers.

Very sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Brigadier General, U.S. Army
Taking advantage of the favorable tactical situation and the demoralized state of confusion within the ranks of the enemy, the squadron penetrated deeper into the heart of the enemy's territory. Thousands of German prisoners were captured and hundreds of pieces of enemy equipment were destroyed.

Within four days the squadron advanced over 190 miles into enemy-held territory succeeding in reaching the junction of the Rhone and Brood Rivers before the main elements of the retreating 19th German Army. There, the enemy was caught by complete surprise as evident by the routine take offs from the airfield just north of Montelímar which resulted in several German planes being hit by patrols. As the route along the east bank of the Rhone River was the last escape route remaining to the, orders received from headquarters was to block and out this escape route wherever possible.

The German 19th Army was spearheaded by the crack and seasoned IIth, Panzer Division who orders where to keep the escape route open at all costs. Notwithstanding the II7thth Squadrons pressed their attack relentlessly and was able to contain the this superior attacking enemy force within the Gateway of Montelímar until reinforcements arrived from the 36th, Division.

3. Throughout the entire operation of the Provisional Armor Group, the II7tht Cav. Ron. Sq., by its display of discipline and a high state of training was able to operate more than 190 miles from its source of supplies with the greatest possible operational combat results. Engaging the enemy wherever he could be found and inflicting heavy and disastrous damage to his communications and supplies, this force made it possible for the rapid and astounding advance of VI Corp. Although suffering from fatigue from continuous harvesting and night, once did the spirit or will of the enemy ever falter by the officers and men of the squadron. Attacking repeatedly against numerically stronger enemy forces and superior tanks of the enemy, the squadron pressed their attacks to destroy the enemy with every means at their disposal.

By their aggressive actions the members of the II7tht Cav. Ron. Sq. contributed immeasurably toward the successful operation of the Provisional Armor Group, thereby reflecting great credit upon themselves and the military service.

Harold J. Messel
Lt. Col. Cavalry
Commanding
Operations of the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron in Southern France I5-30 August 1944 against the 79th German Army.

The 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mech.) was assigned to the American Seventh Army in Italy I July 1944 to prepare and train for the invasion of Southern France. The squadron was attached to VI Corps for tactical operations and assembled in the vicinity of Naples, Italy, for training from 5 July to 2 August 1944.

The plan of employment of the squadron in the forthcoming operation was to attach to each of the three infantry divisions comprising VI Corps, a reinforced reconnaissance troop. Each such troop comprised a reconnaissance troop reinforced with one platoon of light tanks and one section assault guns (M-7 105mmHowitzer).

On the 3rd of August 1944, Troop "A" was attached to the 36th Infantry Division, Troop "B" was attached to the 45th Infantry Division, and Troop "C" was attached to the 3rd Infantry Division. Each troop reported to their respective divisions and continued training to perfect the combined teamwork of each of the divisional task forces.

All elements of the squadron less the rear echelon sailed from Naples Harbor 13 August 1944.

15 August 1944 "D" Day

The invasion armada approached the shores of Southern France on the early morning of the 15th of August 1944. "H" Hour was 0600 and Troop "B" was the first unit of the squadron to land on the beaches. Troop "H" landed with the initial assault waves of the 45th Division at 0700 in the vicinity of St. Maxime (510230) and moved rapidly inland. The troop screened the advance of elements of the 45th Division meeting light enemy resistance. By nightfall it had reached the vicinity of la Garde-Freinet (350225).

The landings of the 3rd Division were temporarily held up due to a large sandbar which prevented the assault craft from approaching the assigned beaches. However, the sandbar was soon breached and Troop "H" landed with the assault waves at "H" Hour plus 5 hours south of St. Tropes (513132). Rapidly advancing inland, elements of the troop met determined enemy resistance in the vicinity (440178) and in a sharp engagement had an armored car knocked out and destroyed. The troop moved northwest and by dark had reached the vicinity of Grimaud (305160).
The mission of the Provisional Armor Group was to advance aggressively toward Bizerte and thence either:
(a) Seize and hold the high ground north of Grenoble; or
(b) Seize the high ground immediately south of Lyon astride the Rhone River; or
(c) Advance to the high ground on the east bank of the Rhone River between Montelier and Livron.

It was hoped that by accomplishing any one of the above objectives, to sever the enemy's communications from the Riviera to the north. Each reconnaissance troop had attached one platoon of infantry and one platoon of light tanks from Troop "F".

Final plans were made and disseminated to all leaders and ranks. General Butler decided to use squadron headquarters for the operation of the task force. Leading elements were to start the advance at 0530 hours 16th August 1944.

16th August 1944 "D" plus 3

Troop "G" jumped off at 0530 hours 16th August 1944 and soon engaged with the enemy in the vicinity north of Dragnigan (305482). After a short sharp encounter the 3rd platoon captured the Commanding General, Lt. Col. F. E. Reuling and the entire staff of the 62nd German Army. Troop "G" continued to meet fanatic enemy resistance, particularly from heavy anti-tank fire from the vicinity (290490). By noon the enemy resistance was over and the troop continued to advance northwest, protecting the right flank of the task force. At Anps (275535) the commander of Troop "B", Capt. Emery Brown who was killed in action a week earlier, while reconnoitering for positions for his guns, entered the town and forced the surrender of the entire garrison, including the commanding officer and 150 of the enemy. Capt. Brown effected this surrender with the assistance of his driver.

With Troop "G" protecting the right flank the balance of the squadron advanced along the axis Dragnigan west toward Gaerne (136443) then northwest to Fox Amphoux (043497) and northeast toward Quinson (368671). The 3rd Platoon of Troop "A" was ordered to proceed toward Barjols (965465) to protect the left and front flank of the task force. This platoon met strong enemy opposition including self-propelled anti-tank. A section of 29s was dispatched to reinforce this platoon. A fierce fight ensued which lasted until darkness, after which the platoon outposted Barjols to contain any possible threat to the task force.

Troop "A" spearheaded the advance of the main column of the squadron and met only light and scattered enemy resistance. The stone bridge at Quinson had been destroyed but with the splendid assistance of the French masons in the vicinity, a ford was hastily constructed and the entire column was able to continue its advance. At Quinson, Troop "A" advanced northwest toward Valensole (932775) protecting the left flank. The main column advanced along its main axis from Quinson toward Riez (602755) with Troop "B" preceding the advance.

By 1800 hours Squadron Headquarters was established on the north eastern outskirts of Riez. By nightfall Troop "A" outposted the area north of Valensole while Troop "B" outposted north of Fulmoisdon (045807). Troop "G" was recalled from the right rear flank and outposted the town of Riez.

Thus at the end of the first days' operation of the Provisional Armor Group, the squadron had spearheaded the advance and penetrated approximately fifty road miles into the enemy's territory. The spirit of the entire command was exceedingly high, perhaps with the realization of an historic military operation in the making.

The French civilians were delirious with joy as town after town was liberated. Their genuine welcome and high enthusiasm was a sight to behold, older people wept unashamedly with tears of joy, while the younger men and women showered the American liberators with wine, melons, fruits and in many instances personal gifts. Perhaps much awe inspiring demonstrations by a down trodden people who felt the yoke of the German heel, gave greater strength and provided a higher incentive to all ranks to fulfill their mission in destroying the machine responsible for the devastation which the enemy left in its wake.

19th August 1944 "D" plus 4

The day's objective was Bizerteon (683172). Troop "B" continued north toward Digne (123066) with the 1st Platoon advancing along the right bank of the Durance River toward Malajal (980606). Enemy resistance was encountered at Chataeuredon (105978) but was soon overcome. Advancing north toward Digne the strongest enemy resistance as yet encountered was set. The German forces was engaged shortly after noon on the southern outskirts of town and fire fight continued for the next six hours. At 1800 hours Troop "B" less the 1st platoon, forced its way into town and forced the surrender of the entire garrison of 800 Germans including the commanding officer, a Brigadier General.
The Ist Platoon of Troop "B" also became engaged with the enemy south of Malijai (950006) where they destroyed an enemy armored car and drove off two others. By night fall this platoon succeeded in crossing the Eline River and occupied Malijai.

Troop "A" led the advance of the main column followed by Troop "G" along the axis Ries Northwest toward Valensole then to Oraison (876860). Troop "A" sent one platoon southwest toward Yvon (600640) to protect the left rear flank. The bridge over the Durance River at (603732) was found to be destroyed.

Troop "A" discovered that the bridge crossing the Durance River la Brillanne (660660) was partly destroyed but would carry the weight of the heaviest vehicles of the tank force. A small German patrol who probably was attempting to completely destroy this bridge, was driven off at the far end of the bridge. Later the enemy attempted to hit the bridge with dive bombers but failed in the attempt. Advancing north along the west bank of the Durance River Troop "A" met strong enemy resistance on the outskirts of Chateau-Arnoux (940060). However, the troop commander Capt. Piddington, after shelling the enemy positions sent in a French Maquis to demand the surrender of the German forces. The German commander agreed to surrender but only on the condition that the German garrison become prisoners of the Americans. The terms were accepted and over 150 prisoners were taken. Troop "A" continued its advance toward the north and reached Sisteron by 1600 hours, outposting the northern outskirts of town.

Troop "G" was assigned the mission of protecting the left flank and crossed at la Brillanne advancing due west then north. The Ist platoon reached Base (600660) without meeting any resistance and outpost the town for the night. The balance of Troop "G" proceeded due north and reached the town of St. Etienne-le-Orgeux (760937). Patrols encountered only scattered resistance a few miles north of this area.

Squadron Headquarters was established on the southern outskirts of Sisteron, advancing approximately another forth road miles during the day. Up to this point the strong enemy resistance was encountered on the day since landing on the beach head. Over a thousand prisoners had been during the last two day's operations.

Radio communication to VI corp Headquarters was no longer possible due to the great distance which separated our headquarters. It was necessary to use liaison sub observation planes to maintain this vital communication.

Available maps of the area became another problem as we had outstripped the planned schedule and an emergency call was made for the vital maps to continue and exploit the disorganized state of affairs of the enemy. It was necessary to operate from the small scale road maps during the next day's operations.

20th August 1944 "D" plus 5

Troop "G" starting in the early hours of the morning spearheaded the advance of the squadron. Advancing along the main axis Sisteron-Monteglin (780298)-Montbronn (713370)-Aix-les-Bains (711368) the troop encountered but light and ineffective enemy resistance. The 2nd platoon reconnected to the west of the town of St. Vincent-sur-Jabron (726133) while the Ist. platoon advanced to Barret-les-bas (712237). Troop "G" was ordered during the early afternoon to advance due north toward Lalleu (645762). Upon reaching that point the 3rd. platoon continued northward and by dark reached Oielle (598660) and outposted the town. The 2nd. platoon which had now rejoined the troop continued northwest to Mens (700854) where strong outposts were stationed. Troop "G" established their CP at la Croix Haute (653720).

Troop "A" was assigned the mission of protecting the right flank of the squadron. Advancing along the main axis moved northeast from les Blanches (727506) toward Bag (970678). Approaching the western outskirts of Gap, the leading elements of Troop "A" encountered dug in enemy positions who were only lightly snared. The enemy only offered light resistance and soon retreated toward town. The 2nd. platoon was supporting the operations of Troop "A" with two M-7 105mm Howitzers, volunteered to enter Gap and demanded the surrender of the German force occupying Gap. Advancing under a white flag of truce, Capt. O. Brown entered Gap and demanded to see the Commanding Officer. At first the German Command was not disposed to surrender, however, when he was informed that a superior armored column was on the outskirts of the town and with the further threat that if he did not surrender, that sixty Flying Fortress would bomb the town at 1700 hours, the German commander somewhat unravelled.

After an hour's discussion, the German commander decided that the French Maquis who were strongly entrenched in the surrounding hills would ambush his force, refused to surrender. Capt. Brown safely returned to his command and ordered his two guns to fire on the radio towers at the southern edge of town. After forty rounds were fired, white flags appeared in town. Capt. Brown returned to Gap where the German commander agreed to surrender.
HEADQUARTERS
117th CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON (Mech.) N. J. N. G.
Pleasant Valley Way
West Orange, New Jersey

To the amazement of everyone a total of 1200 enemy prisoners were surrendered to an American force of less than 150 men. Assistance was requested from the squadron to handle the large amount of prisoners. With the additional assistance of Polish nationals who were part of the German garrison, the prisoners were marched back in a column of four to the airport at Aspres-sur-Bise. Troop "A" remained at Gap and outpost the town. It was reported that an enemy column of 1000 soldiers was marching on Gap from the northeast. However, there was no further enemy reaction that night.

Troop "B" rejoined the squadron, moving up from Digne and outpost Aspres-sur-Bise where the CP of Squadron Headquarters was established. Another fifty miles advance was made by the squadron and by the close of the days operations a deep thrust had been made into the heart of the enemy's territory.

21st August 1944 ("B" plus 6)

Orders were received from VI Corps Headquarters to execute plan "B" of the original mission and advance to the high ground on the east bank of the Rhone River between Montelimar (920530) and Livron (938778) and cut the main road leading to Valence. It was believed that this was the main escape route of the retreating 13th German Army.

Troop "B" was assigned the mission of spearheading this new advance and starting shortly after dawn moved aggressively northwest from Aspres-sur-Bise along the axis Lapeyrère-Dioses (475618)-Bize (402772) then west to Gorgues. The route then turned southwest to St. Marcel-les-Sauvages (960563). By this rapid advance Troop "B" reached the high ground at Magranon (935600) overlooking the main road on the east bank of the Rhone River running between Montelimar and Livron. The 2nd. and 3rd. platoons of Troop "B" advanced to the northeast outskirts of Montelimar, the first allied troops to approach this key town which was to become the outstanding engagement of the Southern French Campaign. Already the advenzuers of the retreating German 13th Army were moving north along this escape route with strong forces and were taking under fire by the armored cars and light tanks of Troop "B". The confusion of the enemy paralyzed the German column; they could not believe that American units had penetrated so deeply in such short time. German planes were still taking off from the airfield north of Montelimar (906563) and were fired upon by the armored cars of Troop "B". The first platoon of Troop "B" enjoyed a day at the expense of the bewildered German column which only a few hours before were leisurely marching along in column. Shortly after dark the enemy counterprived with strong forces and was necessary for the troop consolidate and wait for reinforcements to be rushed up. However, the Ist. platoon held its commanding position and remained in observation.

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HEADQUARTERS
117th CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON (Mech.) N. J. N. G.
Pleasant Valley Way
West Orange, New Jersey

Troop "G" followed behind Troop "B" having assembled at Aspres- sur-Bise. The entire troop occupied Crest with the 2nd. platoon pushing on to Livron where it was ascertained that the bridge south of Livron was blown. The enemy was already fording the Drone River at the vicinity of Pezier (947773) and the 2nd. platoon took this enemy column under fire with their armored cars, obtaining excellent results. The Ist. platoon of Troop "G" advanced northwest from Livron cutting the main highway in the vicinity of (966623). There the platoon engaged another strong enemy column by surprise and when the smoke had cleared away more than fifty enemy vehicles had been destroyed, many more damaged, and the German column was completely disorganized and scattered. The remaining platoon of the Troop, the 3rd., advanced north from Crest to the vicinity of Cheysson (123757) to protect the right flank of the troop. Again with available reinforcements to hold their exposed positions, it was necessary at nightfall to withdraw the Ist. and 2nd. platoons and consolidate Troop "G" in the vicinity of Crest. Strong outposts were maintained as the Germans had strong patrols operating in the vicinity.

Squadron and Task Force Headquarters established its CP at Marsanne (035635) where it immediately came under heavy enemy artillery fire. It was necessary to move the CP where it was out of observation. Troop "A" was recalled from Gap and arrived that evening near the vicinity of Squadron Headquarters.

It was apparent that the retreating 13th. German Army had been caught by surprise and if strong American reinforcements could be rushed to this key sector, it might be possible to cut the last escape route remaining open to the Germans. This sudden and speedy exploit which Troops "B" and "G" accomplished was in the highest degree of rapid advances made in military history. In less than six hours the three platoons of Troop "B" had covered a distance of more than seventy five miles. As a result of this classic dash and doing, so characteristic of cavalry, the scene was set to destroy the bulk of the German 13th. Army. It remained only for the main body of the American VI Corps to exploit this sudden success and rush sufficient troops and armor to effectively destroy this army before the larger part of the enemy force would escape.

Unfortunately the brilliant spearhead of the Provisional Armor Group had raced so far out ahead that the bulk of the American force was still over 150 miles to the rear. Thus by "D" Day plus six the Task Force had advanced the amazing distances of over 250 miles since landing on the beaches of Southern France 15th. August 1944. Had not the highest qualities of leadership been displayed by all leaders, particularly those of junior rank, the successful accomplishment of this mission would not have been possible. The highest state of morale and esprit de corps prevailed throughout the operation and was an important contributing factor toward this great achievement.

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HEADQUARTERS
17th CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON (Mntz.) N. J. N. G.
 Pleasant Valley Way
 West Orange, New Jersey

22 August 1944 "D" plus 7

With the realization that supporting troops would still take another day to reach this sector and determined to hold at all costs this vital gain, the squadron employed its maximum strength. The plan was to attempt to block all key roads to the right flank of the German escape route between Montelmar and Lorol (907056).

Troop "A" blocked all roads leading north across the Roubleon River from St. Jacques (992590) east to Namas (100934). The enemy had succeeded in already crossing the river and the Ist. platoon became heavily engaged with a superior force of enemy Mark 7 tanks supported by pancreatic fire. It was soon ascertain that the IIth. Panzer Division were opposing our elements. This platoon was surrounded but continued to offer fierce resistance until two armored cars were destroyed and the jeeps seriously damaged. Reinforcements were rushed to this position and with the assistance of two tank destroyers, the platoon was able to contain this threat. The enemy continued to probe this entire area by nightfall, Troop "A" effectively prevented any enemy penetrations.

Troop "B" continued to block in the sector north east of Montelmar and east along the main highway from Montelmar to Livron. The enemy likewise was determined to hold this escape route open and sent strong patrols supported by tanks against this sector. However Troop "B" by determined resistance repulsed and contained these probing enemy patrols. However, a few enemy tanks did succeed in penetrating but were not successful in achieving effective results.

Troop "G" supported by the guns of Troop "F" was assigned the mission of securing the north flank along the Brooks River from Lorol east to Grane. The "G" Troop guns were placed in position on the high ground overlooking Lorol at (907050). Dominating the escape corridor of the retreating German Army which by now was moving in three columns abreast along the main road leading to Lorol, Troop "G" poured a murderous fire into the bewildered German column, firing direct at 2500 yards. Hundreds of German vehicles were set ablaze and destroyed. The enemy frantically attempted to take cover but the enemy column was effectively blocked on the road and Troop "G" enjoyed a field day. There was no question but that the terrain held by Troop "G" and the platoon of Troop "S" was the key terrain feature of this battleground. As long as it was held it would prevent the enemy from escaping across the Drone River to safety.

At the close of day the enemy had penetrated only slightly into our lines. However it could not be expected that the enemy would permit our occupying the dominating features and thereby preventing him from keeping this vital escape route open without first making a strong and determined effort to destroy this threat.
Their mission was to reconnoiter aggressively toward Briançon (39537) which is situated near the French-Italian border deep in the Alps. This force assembled in the vicinity of Guntins (130568) late in the evening and prepared to move out at daylight the following morning.

Troop "G" while still engaged with a determined enemy north-east of Montelizar, was ordered to relieve Troop "A" from their positions along the River Roubion. This relief was effected at 0500 hours and Troop "G" maintained strong blocking positions.

Troop "G" protected the north flank maintaining strong positions on the south side of the Drone River. Strong patrols were constantly probing toward the north to determine the intentions of the German forces. The 1st platoon reached Alleix (045772) and a strong roadblock was established. The 1st platoon advanced north to Tropramant (127687) and sent light patrols to the north and northwest. No enemy resistance was encountered in this sector.

The squadron CP was established in the vicinity of Puy St. Martin (087639).

25th. August 1944 "D" plus 10

At daybreak the enemy launched strong attacks along the north and south banks of the Drone River east from Loriol and Livron. This attack was supported by several enemy Mark V tanks and our light elements were forced to give ground. The enemy succeeded in taking Alleix before and by 0500 hours Troop "G" was engaged with the enemy on the western outskirts of Gramme. Attacking with infantry supported by five Mark V tanks the enemy again forced the platoon to defend itself and to fall back. The enemy succeeded in occupying Gramme and established road blocks leading east and south. In this engagement Capt. Omer Brown who had distinguished himself on many occasions during the operations throughout the Southern France Campaign, was killed in action attempting to direct his assault guns in a vain effort to prevent the enemy tanks from seizing this vital town.

It was apparent that the enemy's intention was to protect his right flank and launch an uninterrupted movement of his columns over the Dron River. Again elements of the 11th Panzer Division were identified and the unit which was launching these determine attacks.

Troop "G" was ordered to the high ground southeast of Loriol to relieve the pressure against Troop "H". However, the enemy had already seized this key terrain feature which was originally held three days previously. It was indeed a tactical mistake when higher headquarters ordered the elements of the squadron to another mission which forced the giving up of the most important terrain feature of perhaps the entire Montelizar battleground.

HEADQUARTERS
117th CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON (Mech.) N. J. N. G.
Pleasant Valley Way
West Orange, New Jersey

TROOP "A" was detached from the Provisional Armored Group and served on the Swiss border with O.S.S. and the French Maquis. As part of the Bilbo Task Force moved out from Chamonix spearheading this newly organized task force. The 1st platoon was ordered to proceed to the Gap-Aspres-sur-Buech-Montéglin-Sisteron route and crossed the Durance River at Chateau-Arnoux moving east toward Malijai continuing due north to the platoon turned north to La Javie (212560). Continuing due north the platoon reached Vincent-les-Forts (212545). No sign of the enemy was observed in this sector which contained many well-organized group of French Maquis, some of whom joined up with the platoon.

On the 2nd, the platoon reached Vincent-les-Forts (205588). No sign of the enemy was observed in this sector which contained many well-organized group of French Maquis, some of whom joined up with the platoon.

On the 3rd, the platoon reached Puy St. Martin (087639).

26th. August 1944 "D" plus II

Realizing that the 11th German Army still was escaping north by forcing the Drone River west of Loriol, higher headquarters strongly reinforced. However, it appeared that the enemy's right flank was protected on the western sector of the Condillac Pass. The enemy attacked with infantry supported by three guns of Troop "G." The platoon outposted Crest supported by three guns of Troop "H." The light tanks of Troop "G" were assembled for the first time as a troop since landing on the beaches. The troop was attached to a task force landing on the beaches. The attack that was to attack through the Condillac Pass (960553). The attack that was to attack through the Condillac Pass (960553). The attack was to attack through the Condillac Pass (960553).
The Squadron and Group OP moved to the vicinity of (957638) where it was heavily shelled for thirty-six consecutive hours. The enemy continued to ford the Drons River despite the heavy shelling which resulted in the loss of many enemy vehicles.

Troop "A" operating near the Italian border ran into strong enemy resistance at La Sevara l'Aoula. The enemy appeared determined to hold this pass. The Ist. platoon of Troop "A" attempted to contact the remainder of the troop advancing from the north. The resistance was too strong for the platoon. The enemy was engaged from both the north and south and many casualties were inflicted on the enemy with only light damaged to the vehicles of the troop. Strong organized support was received from local Maquis groups who were supported by the O.S.S. Their splendid assistance although ill equipped, indeed an inspiration to the American force and spur their efforts to greater heights. By nightfall however the enemy still held the pass. It was expected that elements of the Air Borne Task Force moving up from the Riviera might arrive by the early morning.

27th August 1944 "I" plus I2

The American plan was to attack through the Besou Pass (984703) and drive north toward Loridol. One battalion of infantry supported by medium tanks and Troop "F" with their light tanks was assigned the mission of breaking out through the pass. Another task force composed of a company of tank destroyers, a battalion of infantry and Troop "D" was to attack west from Orano toward Loridol.

The attack started at dawn and immediately met strong enemy resistance, however the German soon showed signs of giving ground. Fire fights ensued throughout the day and limited gains were made. Troop "F" with its seven M-7 105mm howitzers were emplaced in a commanding position at (983705) overlooking the main highway just south of Loridol. Shooting direct at about 2500 yards the troop destroyed a large number of vehicles including a number that were painted with red crosses, but which blew up with terrific explosions when hit.

They were supposed to be medical ambulances but were without question carrying ammunition. By the close of day it appeared that the enemy's escape route would soon be cut. However the enemy continued his attempts to ford the Drone regardless of the losses.

28th August 1944 "D" plus I3

The American forces with determination were steadily closing on Loridol and cutting the enemy's last escape route in The Rhone Valley south of the Drons River. The enemy attempted to delay the advance but continued strong pressure was exerted and the Germans steadily gave ground.

With task forces driving from the east and south it appeared that the final gap would be closed. Troops "B" and "G" supported both these task forces while Troop "F" light tanks supported the attack from the south.

Troop "A" on the eastern border of France turned north toward Briancon where strong enemy resistance was met. The chemelot mortar company attached to the task force suffered heavy casualties in the days operations. A patrol from Troop "A" succeeded in entering Briancon after dark and brought back valuable information of the enemy's dispositions. The troop less the Ist. platoon outposted the southern approaches to the town. The Ist. platoon continued to maintain pressure against the enemy awaiting relief by the A.T.F. before rejoining the troop.

29th August 1944 "D" plus I4

The final stage was set and before noon the last escape route was cut thereby trapping many hundreds of German vehicles and thousands of German troops. Thus after eight days when elements of Troop "B" first surprised a bewildered enemy, the trap was sprung on the remnants of the 19th. German Army. Thus the Montélimar campaign came to a successful close. It will stand out as one of the most important turning points for the Seventh American Army in their operations in France.

Briancon was finally occupied by the Bibo Task Force and Troop "A" prepared to rejoin the squadron the following day near the vicinity of Grenoble.

30th August 1944 "D" plus I5

With its mission complete the Provisional Armor Group was dissolved. The squadron less Troop "A" assembled and prepared to move north of Grenoble. Late that afternoon after a road advance of more than 110 miles the entire squadron assembled near the vicinity of Moirans (52462). A new mission was anticipated momentarily which would take the squadron once again in pursuit of what remained of the 19th. German Army.

Final Summary

The operations of the II7th. Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mechanized) for the period 15th. August 1944 to the 30th. August 1944 in Southern France constituted two phases.

The first phase covered the period from "D" Day, 15th. August 1944 to 17th. August 1944. In this period of operation each of
The Squadron and Group CP moved to the vicinity of (967638) where it was heavily shelled for the previous six consecutive hours. The enemy continued to ford the Drone River despite the heavy shelling which resulted in the loss of many enemy vehicles.

Troop "A" operating near the Italian border ran into strong enemy resistance at la Seara l'Aoula. The enemy appeared determined to hold this pass. The Ist. platoon of Troop "A" attempted to contact the remainder of the troop advancing from the north. The resistance was too strong for the platoon. The enemy was engaged from both the north and south and many casualties were inflicted on the enemy with only slight damage to the vehicles of the troop. Strong organized support was received from local Maquis groups who were supported by the G.S.S. Their splendid assistance although ill equipped, indeed an inspiration to the American force and spur their efforts to greater heights. By nightfall however the enemy still held the pass. It was expected that elements of the Air Borne Task Force moving up from the Riviera might arrive by the early morning.

27th August 1944 "D" plus 12

The American plan was to attack through the Bessou Pass (984703) and drive north toward Loriol. One battalion of infantry supported by medium tanks and Troop "G" with their light tanks was assigned the mission of breaking out through the pass. Another task force consisted of a company of tank destroyers, a battalion of infantry and Troop "G" to attack west from Brune toward Lorial.

The attack started at dawn and immediately met strong enemy resistance however the Germans soon showed signs of giving ground. Fire fights ensued throughout the day and limited gains were made. Troop "G" with its seven H-7 105mm howitzers were employed in a commanding position at (983795) overlooking the main highway just south of Loriol. Shooting direct at about 2500 yards the troop destroyed a large number of vehicles including a number that were painted red crosses, but which blew up with terrific explosions when hit. They were supposed to be medical ambulances but were without question carrying ammunition. By the close of day it appeared that the enemy's escape route would soon be cut. However the enemy continued his attempt to ford the Drone regardless of the losses.

28th August 1944 "D" plus 13

The American forces with determination were steadily closing on Loriol and cutting the enemy's last escape route in The Rhone Valley south of the Drone River. The enemy attempted to delay the advance by continued strong pressure was exerted and the Germans steadily gave ground.

With task forces driving from the east and south it appeared that the final gap would be closed. Troops "B" and "Q" supported both these task forces while Troop "P" light tanks supported the attack from the south.

Troop "A" on the eastern border of France turned north toward Briancon where strong enemy resistance was met. The chemical mortar company attached to the task force suffered heavy casualties in the days operations. A patrol from Troop "A" succeeded in entering Briancon after dark and brought back valuable information of the enemy's dispositions. The troop less the Ist. platoon outposted the southern approaches to the town. The Ist. platoon continued to maintain pressure against the enemy awaiting relief by the ABTJ before rejoining the troop.

23th August 1944 "D" plus s4

The final stage was set and before noon the last escape route was cut thereby trapping many hundreds of German vehicles and thousands of German troops. Thus after eight days when elements of Troop "B" first surprised a bewildered enemy, the trap was sprung on the remnants of the 19th. German Army. Thus the Montlimar campaign came to a successful close. It will stand out as one of the most important turning points for the Seventh American Army in their operations in France.

Briancon was finally occupied by the Bilbo Task Force and Troop "A" prepared to rejoin the squadron the following day near the vicinity of Grenoble.

20th August 1944 "D" plus 15

With its mission complete the Provisional Armor Group was dissolved. The squadron less Troop "A" assembled and prepared to move north of Grenoble. Late that afternoon after a road advance of more than 110 miles the entire squadron assembled near the vicinity of Moirans (524425). A new mission was anticipated momentarily which would take the squadron once again in pursuit of what remained of the 19th. German Army.

Final Summary

The operations of the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (mechanized) for the period 15th. August 1944 to the 30th. August 1944 in Southern France constituted two phases.

The first phase covered the period from "D" Day, 15th. August 1944 to 17th. August 1944. In this period of operation each of
the reinforced reconnaissance troops attached to an infantry division landed with the assault forces and screened the advance of their daylight. Wasting no time a well established beachhead and an amphibious operation was an overwhelming success, higher headquarters planned to exploit the disorganized state of the enemy. A hard hitting and highly mobile force was needed to exploit the initial success and harass and disrupt the enemy's supply and communications.

Possessing the necessary requisites of extreme mobility and long range radio communication and tremendous fire power, the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron was highly capable of spearheading a task force and exploiting to the fullest degree and to the disadvantage of the enemy.

The Butler Task Force was organized and on the 16th August 1944 the second phase was commenced. Taking advantage of the excellent radio communication facilities of the squadron, higher headquarters was constantly in touch of the situation at all times. Operating over great distance, the failure or lack of long range radio communication would not have made it possible for the higher command to follow up and consolidate the rapid gains made by the squadron. The operations of VIII and IX Corps were planned by the intelligence furnished by the squadron as to the enemy's dispositions, state of morale, type of terrain and road net condition of bridges and due to a large extent the disruption of the enemy's communications.

The successful operations of the squadron can be attributed to a large extent to the material aid and assistance provided by the French Maquis. These patriots provided valuable information concerning the whereabouts of the enemy and their strength. The also guided units of the squadron to by passes and river fords where the Germans had destroyed all bridges in the vicinity. Many of the Maquis volunteered their services to fight the common enemy and attached themselves to the various troops. Time and again they contacted other Maquis groups operating ahead of our forces to tell them of our approach. When receiving this information the Maquis would boldly strike at their hated foe. In many instances our forces came upon such engagements and successfully completed the route of the enemy.

This most valuable assistance given by the Maquis was indeed an inspiration; their deeds of valor were in keeping with the traditions of free loving people, who unhesitatingly gave of their life's blood to free their country of their hated oppressors. Here words cannot adequately do justice to the contributions to the cause of democracy. Their valiant deeds will always remain in the memories of every member of the squadron.

The high morale and esprit de corps which existed within the squadron was a contributing factor to the amazing advance. The high quality of leadership demonstrated by all ranks particularly the junior officers and non-commissioned officers were exemplary. On many occasions platoons and sections operated by themselves for periods of several days at great distances from higher headquarters. Numerous decisive actions were fought and serious obstacles overcome by these small units. Had anything less than the highest qualities of leadership existed, it could not have been possible to achieve the resultant successful operations of the squadron.

It is estimated that approximately 6645 square miles of Southern France was liberated by the 117th Cav. Recon. Sq. from 16th August 1944 to the 21st August 1944 when the squadron reached the north eastern outskirts of Montlucon. The road distance from the beachhead to this point as followed along the main axis of the squadron was approximately 165 miles.

In over running such a large portion of Southern France in so short a period when supplies lines were stretched to the straining point reflects the highest standards of training and discipline. At no time did the total strength of the squadron exceed more than 650 officers and enlisted men. Losses in personnel and equipment was not considered high in keeping with the scope of the operations.

In closing it may be said that the highest traditions of the service were upheld and that the squadron can justly be proud of its contributions to victory and its outstanding performance of duty during its operations in France.

Harold J. Tannael
Lt. Col. Cavalry

In the field, Germany
26 April 1945
CITATION

DECI SION N° 267

Sur la proposition du Ministre de la Défense Nationale,
Le Président du Gouvernement Provisoire de la République

assigne:

A L'ORDRE DE L'ARMÉE

117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron

"Elite unit which, from the time of the landing in Provence, fought without respite, in the advance guard of the Seventh U.S. Army, up to the borders of Lorraine.

Reconnaissance group of the Seventh U.S. Army Corps, landed successfully on the beaches of Sainte-Maxime and Sainte-Tropez. From the second day, gave proof of the finest tactical skill and contributed to the success of the action of the Corps, notably in the annihilation of important enemy forces in the region of Montélimar.

Under the impetus of an energetic and remarkably audacious Commander, did not hesitate to advance 120 miles beyond the Corps in order to occupy by surprise the strong points and communication centers of this region, inflicting on the enemy, afterwards, severe losses in material and capturing more than 2,500 prisoners, including three Generals.

During all this period, worked in close liaison with local resistance groups and efficiently coordinated the activity of the Maquis which joined its ranks."

THIS CITATION INCLUDES THE AWARDING OF THE CRIOX DE GUERRE WITH PALM

PARIS, 22 JULY 1946

PARIS, le 2 OCT 1946

Pour le "Ministre et par autorisation
Le Chef du Bureau des Décorations
PO/Le Chef de la Section "Décorations Diverses"

J. FRAGONI
RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
Guerre 1939-1945

CITATION

DE C I S I O N N° 267

Sur la proposition du Ministre de la Défense Nationale,
LE PRÉSIDENT DU GOUVERNEMENT PROVISOIRE DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE
C I T E :
A L'ORDRE DE L'ARMÉE

11e Squadron Chars Reconnaissance U.G.

"Unité d'élite qui, depuis le débarquement en PROVENCE a combattu sans arrière la 7e Armée U.S jusqu'aux marches lorraines.

Groupe de reconnaissance du 11e CA U.S a débarqué avec succès sur les plages de SAINTE-MAURICE et de SAINT-THIERRY. Dans le second jour il a fait preuve des plus belles qualités manœuvrables et contribué au succès de l'action de ce groupe, notamment à l'arrêt du mouvement de forces ennemies importantes dans la région de L'HERMITAGE.

Sous l'impulsion d'un chef énergique, il a devancé son groupe et, avec une audacie remarquable, n'a pas hésité à devancer son groupe de pluie de 100 Kms pour occuper par surprise les positions dominantes et les noyaux de communication de cette région, infligeant ensuite à l'ennemi d'importantes pertes en matériel et capturant plus de 2500 prisonniers dont 3 Généraux.

Pendant tout cette période, a travaillé en liaison étroite avec les éléments de résistance locaux et a heureusement coordonné l'activité des réseaux qui se sont joints à lui."

...CES CÉRÉMONIES ONT CONDUIT À L'ATTRIBUTION DE LA CROIX DE GUERRE

AVEC PAIX.

Fait à PARIS, le 22 juillet 1945
Signé : BERANGER

JEAN BERTHÈRE

Pays, le 2 OCT 1980
Pour le Ministre et par autorisation
Le Chef du Bureau des Décorations
PO/Le Chef de la Section "Décorations Diverses"

J. FRAIGNON

Col. Thomas C. Piddington, (Ret.)
Route 1, Box 819
Kill Devil Hills, NC 27948

August 31, 1985

President Ronald Reagan
White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

I appeal to you as President, Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces and as a human being to ask your help in obtaining recognition for meritorious service performed by members of the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mechanized) during World War II in defense of this country and the freedom which we and other free world countries value so highly. We are not asking that a monument be constructed in their honor nor that their names be inscribed on brass or in stone to be preserved for posterity. We are asking simply that their heroic efforts to preserve liberty and freedom be recognized by their government. While this will not bring back those who are no longer living, it will give their families and those who are still with us who have formed the 117th Cavalry Association the satisfaction of knowing that their efforts were not in vain.

My efforts to obtain recognition of the unit in the form of the Presidential Unit Citation through other channels (encl. 1), despite the fact that a unit citation request was submitted prior to May 2, 1951 (encl. 2), have been unsuccessful and I find it ironic that the French Government saw fit to honor the Unit (encl. 3), while the government for which they fought so gallantly will not do so for a purely arbitrary reason.

You are our "Court of Last Resort" and although we feel strongly that there is plenty of evidence to support a Presidential Unit Citation, we are nevertheless confident that, regardless of the final decision, our request will be given thorough and careful consideration.

Thomas C. Piddington
Colonel, (Ret.)

3 Enclosures:
encl. 1 a/s
encl. 2 a/s
encl. 3 a/s

CC:
Senator Jesse Helms
Col. Harold J. Cressel, (Ret.)
President 117th Cav. Assn.
Part 3. Action At Montreval, France

The Squadron was relieved of attachment to Task Force Butler on the 30th of August 1944, and continued an aggressive advance north on the right flank of the harried German 13th Army.

Again under direct control of VI Corp., the Squadron was completely assembled in the vicinity of Maivron, which lies approximately 275 miles from the Beach Head of Southern France.

On the 25th of August 1944 Captain Omer Brown, Commander of "B" Troop was killed in an enemy tank action at Loriol, France. Omer was a very close friend. Having joined the National Guard in Westfield, New Jersey at the same time, I had also joined up. The sad part of this story is, that Captain Brown had a ninety-day leave to the United States which he was to take upon completion of our assignment to "Task Force Butler", only five days away. When I went to recover the Essex Troop ring he was wearing to return it to his family, it was missing along with his finger. We buried him in Loriol, France with full honors and many tears. Incidentally, we had both received our Essex Troop rings together.

The next advance of the Squadron was thirty miles north of Lyon to the vicinity of Chalamont, where hard fighting continued. The Germans were determined to protect the route of March of their 13th Army back toward their Homeland.

On the first of September 1944, the Squadron was screening the 45th Infantry Division as the Allies kept stabbing at the flanks of the German Army hastily retreating to Germany. The enemy attacked savagely with tanks in greater numbers and our casualties increased.

The large Town of Bourg was now under heavy attack by the Allies, and the Squadron swung to the north to again cut off the leading elements of the enemy.

Late on the 2nd of September 1944, orders were received from VI Corp. Headquarters to move during the night and seize the Town of Montreval, France. This was to be an end run, to get ahead of the leading columns of the 19th German Army and cut them off or blunt their movement toward the west and away from their escape route to Germany.

Major McGarry was placed in direct command of all Squadron Units reaching Montreval, which we seized by daylight 3rd of September, 1944. It was to be a day no member of the entire Squadron will ever forget.

Shortly after occupying the town of Montreval, the Germans attacked with their 11th Panzer Division (The Ghost Division) and soon overwhelmed the men of Troops "A" and "B". The Heroism of the individual Officers and men were outstanding and they fought
valiantly against superior forces. The personal bravery and aggressive action were of such magnitude that the German Commander was amazed at the small numerically force opposing him and without any heavy armor. In an unusual gesture, the German General issued orders that the captured American Soldiers were to be treated with respect and allowed to keep their personal equipment.

In this engagement the entire Personnel of two magnificent Troops "A" and "B" were either killed, wounded or captured. No one escaped from these Units, and both Captains were wounded and captured. When the Tank Troop "F" attacked later to relieve the pressure on Troops "A" and "B" every tank was either knocked out or hit and damaged. The Leader of this attack was killed and was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. The Nation's second highest Award.

In an earlier action in which Lt. Lee of "A" Troop distinguished himself, he was awarded the "Congressional Medal of Honor" by President Truman. Copy of his Citation is attached. It was the only medal of Honor to be awarded a Cavalryman of a Mechanized Squadron in World War II.

Perhaps the actions of the 117th Mech. Cavalry Squadron at Montréal, France on the 3rd of September 1944, is best told by an after action report. I prepared for the Historical Record. It was indeed surprising that this action report which was filed with VI Corp. that never a word was mentioned by anyone from Corp. Headquarters. Perhaps it may have been due to the truthfulness and facts and that the Corp. Commander Lt. General Lucien Truscott, an old Cavalryman was nominated to succeed General Mark Clark as Commander of the Fifth Army in Italy. Lt. General Edward Brooks succeeded General Truscott as head of VI Corp.

Fortunately, Major McGregor was able to escape late in the day from Montréal, but in a very dazed and shocked condition. Most of us were also in an emotionally charged state, due to the great losses the Squadron suffered, which was devastating to say the least.

However, by the next morning, we recovered, regrouped and on the 4th of September 1944 with naked shift armored sections, the Squadron continued to press the attack against the flanks of German 19th Army.

The following pages of the "Action at Montréal, France" tells the full and real story of this Heroic Action in full and complete perspective.

"A Day to be Long Remembered!"

ACTION AT MONTRÉAL, FRANCE
2-3 September 1944
117TH MECH. CAVALRY SQUADRON

The story of Montréal began on the evening of 2 September 1944 when the Squadron received the following message from Brigadier General Carlton, VI Corps Deputy Commander.

"Seize and hold Montréal by daylight, establish road blocks on the roads leading into the town from the South, the East and the North so as to cut off the escape route of the 19th German Army."

Lead with Troop "F" followed by Troop "A" supported by Troops "E" and "F".

Orders for mission were promptly prepared by Major Sansel and delivered by Colonel Hodge to Captain Wood of "F" Troop and Captain Piddington, Troop "A".

Troop "F" less one section and Troop "F" less one platoon supported this action.

Radio contact was maintained between Squadron Headquarters and Troop "F" during the early hours of 3 September 1944 while occupying Montréal. However, Troop "F" was not received too well while Squadron Headquarters was receiving 5 x 5.

It was soon apparent in early morning from direct radio conversation with Captain Wood, that infantry assistance was urgently needed.
Upon radio instructions from Colonel Hodge, Major Sansel personally visited VI Corps Headquarters and apprised the Chief of Operations of the exact situation. Requested that infantry support was urgently needed if the forces of the 117th were to hold Montreval.

No direct assistance was given by Brigadier General Carlton, but instead the writer and Colonel Hodge were told separately to contact Commanding General of 45th Infantry Division and see if he could render any support.

After several critical hours of conversation, the 2nd Battalion of the 179th Infantry was placed at our disposal, without transportation and twenty miles from Montreval.

Also, at noon 3 September 1944, Troop "C" was relieved of their assignment and reverted to control of the 117th.

The writer assembled this entire force, mounting the infantry on Troop "C" vehicles and those of Squadron Headquarters and proceeded under forced march to the vicinity of Montreval.

Our mission was to attack and relieve the pressure on Montreval.

En route, I picked up a heavy armored patrol including two (2) Tank Destroyers - all from the 3rd Infantry Division.

This entire force arrived on the outskirts of Montreval at approximately 1530 after a rapid forced march.

An immediate attack plan was prepared by the Battalion Commander of the 2nd Battalion, 179th Infantry, Major Sansel and Captain Nugent of Troop "C".

Time of departure was set for 1600 hours.

At exactly 1555 on 3 September 1944, a message was received from VI Corps not to attack and move our forces to high ground, East of Montreval.

Needless to say, even if our attack had been launched, it would have proven indecisive. All elements of the 117th had already been killed, wounded or captured.

At about 1700 hours, Major Sansel advised VI Corps of the situation and extent of our heavy losses.

Early that evening, General Carlton visited our Headquarters to launch an informal investigation of the entire affair.

One of General Carlton's main criticisms was that the 117th did not leave an escape route open and withdraw when it was apparent that the squadron was against superior forces.

However, the writer strongly opposed this view inasmuch as General Carlton's order read "Seize and hold". The order did not permit a commander to exercise any discretion or possible withdrawal.

The real criticism should be directed at VI Corps for assigning a mission without the full infantry and tank support so vitally essential when opposing an enemy force led by an outstanding armored division; also the indifference of General Carlton to his responsibilities and lack of comprehension of the vital time elements highly essential in exploiting the initial success of the 117th in seizing Montreval by daylight.

A very major successful action could have been achieved at Montreval if VI Corps had truly evaluated the situation and thoroughly planned this operation with full and adequate troop participation.
Instead, a Mechanized Cavalry Squadron of limited strength, men weary, the vehicles and equipment below standard, was sent on a mission more in keeping with horse cavalry techniques but fighting against a highly trained, heavily armored German Panzer Division.

Both General Truscott and General Carlton wilfully sacrificed a brave and efficient Cavalry Squadron on the altar of their Fort Riley Cavalry School ego.

It never occurred to these Cavalry Generals that a Cavalry outfit ever could possibly face defeat.

The shame of this Montreval action was the failure of those in command who ordered this mission, to fully project the full scope of the enemy’s potential capabilities and determination not to permit Montreval to block the retreat of the entire 19th German Army’s march back to Germany.

The enemy reacted violently and attacked in strength with his most capable troops, the 11th Panzer (Ghost) Division.

The moment the original order was received at Squadron Headquarters, it was apparent to all officers of the 117th, regardless of rank, the full meaning of this mission.

It was quickly recognized that, without complete support, our mission would be difficult indeed.

That this situation was likewise not recognized by responsible experienced officers of VI Corps, is difficult to comprehend. The Intelligence furnished by the 117th alone was sufficient to apprise the staff of VI Corps, an accurate and up-to-date battle situation.

Perhaps some other interesting intelligence was the personal habits of our generals indulging too strongly in the grape at a time when vital decisions were being made.

General Carlton could easily be considered an outstanding host with the unhappy faculty of trying to out-drink his guests.

Perhaps the action of the 117th Cavalry Squadron at Montreval can best be summed up by the fact that the leadership displayed won a Medal of Honor and three Distinguished Service Crosses, innumerable Silver Stars, Bronze Stars and over 150 Purple Hearts.

Also, every tank of Troop "P" was disabled from enemy action.

Nevertheless, on 4 September 1944, the 117th Cavalry Squadron maintained its continuous combat record, by taking to the field reorganized with six battle sections comprising all elements of the Squadron.

Prepared by;

[Signature]

Harold J. Samsel
Major, Cavalry - S-3
Operations Officer
117th Med. Cavalry Squadron
VI Corps, Seventh Army

Somewhere in France - 3 -
Sept. 15, 1944
Event: Montrevel, France

Date: 3 September 1944

Location with Preface: In the evening of 2 September 1944 at the Command Post (CP), 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mechanized) located just east of Morbot, France received orders from 6th Corps, 7th U.S. Army Southern France to seize and hold Montrevel, France at dawn on the 3rd of September 1944. Troop B commanded by Captain John L. Wood was to lead the attack. Troop A, commanded by Thomas C. Piddington was to keep lines of communication open and rendered support as required. Major Robert McGarry, Executive Officer of the Squadron was designed overall commander of this small force.

At about 2200 hours on 2 September Platoon leaders and key NCO’s of Troop B and A held a meeting in a small farm house (20 miles or more east of Montrevel) to review the orders and scout reports. Troop B scouts indicated that the 11th Panzer Division was east of Rhone River in great force. Excellent reconnaissance by Scouts of Troop B were conducted throughout the entire day of the 2nd of September. 6th Corps Intelligence indicated this report of Troop B scouts was not true.

During his assignment as Commander of Troop B he displayed poise, initiative and above all great courage while preparing and executing a mission which all involved considered that it would fail.

Captain Wood said we must get on with the mission, regardless of the consequences and odds. He imbued confidence in sagging corals. Finally under his determination all agreed to complete the mission with a will.

The attack of Montrevel was accomplished in a surprise move at dawn on the morning of 3 September 1944. Approximately 60 German prisoners were taken by Troop B from the 11th Panzer Division. Several B Troopers became casualties after a brisk fire fight directed by Captain Wood. The town was quickly outposted and occupied. In about two hours a regiment of the 11th panzer division pushed off the routes in and out of Montrevel. We were blocking the Panzer Division main supply route which was heavily engaged with the 45th Infantry Division (American) at Borg France many miles south of Montrevel. Captain Piddington, commander of Troop A, with a part of the 1st Platoon and radio cars broke through to render assistance and support to B Troop. The force in Montrevel was quickly surrounded and the attack by the Panzer commenced in earnest.

Captain Wood displayed outstanding ingenuity in setting up defense obstacles throughout the area. Unfortunately 37 men guns and 60 mm mortars were no match for German 88 guns and large caliber self propelled artillery backed by Tank and Infantry units.

The casualties began to mount up tremendously by early afternoon. Captain Wood constantly assured the wounded that all will end well. At that point we expected a relief force.

We received word later that all relief forces were cancelled by 6th Corps and that we were on our own.

At the final defense bastion in the Montrevel school house enemy tanks (88 guns) were firing within 50 yards of our position with protection and support of Infantry. Of a force of about 135 we figured that about 25 or 30 were left to defend the school. All others were killed, wounded or captured throughout the day.
The remaining troopers all armed themselves with any weapons available. Captain Wood manned a light machine gun. Captain Piddington fed the remaining belt of ammunition into the gun. Wood tried to keep the enemy infantry in cover as well as a few shots at the tank guns. Enemy tank fire was aimed at our machine gun position. I, Piddington had to drag Wood away from the gun because the next shot would destroy our position—which it did. The gun was in pieces. Several other troopers became casualties throughout the lower part of the school.

Captain Wood was ready to make the supreme sacrifice at the moment. He showed great courage and deserves the highest praise for his heroic deeds.

Personal observations by Captain Thomas C. Piddington,
Commanding Officer, Troop A 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron
(Mechanized).

Signed:

Thomas C. Piddington
Captain 0425249

Major Padraig M. O’Dea
NRE Dept., USAARES
Fort Knox, Kentucky
20 February 1959

Lt General L. K. Truscott, Jr
ca E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc
300 4th Avenue
New York 10, New York

Dear General Truscott:

I have read for the second time "Command Missions" and I have found it most interesting reading. Especially so, since I have had personal contact with several of the events discussed. In an instance or two, I wish to offer, for what it may be worth, corrective comment.

More particularly: on page 439, in your aide’s Journal notes for Monday, 3 September, 1944 (should be Sunday, 3 September, 1944) appears the following statement: "Debacle at Monreal when 117th Cavalry go to sleep and are surrounded and captured. G/F goes to find out what happened. Gen. talks to Major McGeary, Exes of 117th in War Room after dinner. Still no explanation, but remnants pulled out and sent north." Several lines later in the explanation of the Journal notes you say, "this detachment had obviously grown somewhat careless, because when the 117th Panzer (my note, "Geist" or "Ghost") Division withdrew during the night, these two companies were surprised and overrun, and most of one and a half companies were captured." The above statements are a sad commentary on the gallant efforts of the men of the 117th Cavalry who were in Monreal, and a poor moment to those who died there.

On 3 September 1944 I was the Executive Officer of Troop B, and I would like to state most emphatically that we were not overrun because we were asleep.

Briefly this is what did happen: On or about 0300 hours 2 September, 1944, the mission for B Troop with A Troop attached, to move into and secure Monreal, was brought to the B Troop CP by Lt Col Hodge, 3d CO, and Maj. Samuel, 3d 5-3: B Troop with A Troop attached, entered and secured Monreal on or about 0600 hours 3 September. (It was a clear, beautiful Sunday. Most of the Troop was tired and rather weary as a result of our continuous operations). I say we entered rather than captured the town, because the Germans in it were completely surprised and offered little opposition. We opened the ball by capturing between 90 and 100 German troops.
Units of the 11th Panzer Division began attacking Montrevel on about 0800 hours, initially with infantry, later with infantry and armor. These attacks were repulsed, but continued relentlessly throughout the day later including M4A3 V (Panther) tanks.

The troop repeatedly requested artillery support, including 155 mm gun. When we received our mission we were told a battery of 155 mm guns was in position to fire on targets in the Montrevel area. No fire support was ever received.

If, again the big IF, we had had anything larger than a 37 mm gun mounted on the armored car in Montrevel that day, the outcome would have been quite different.

My position was overrun on about 1330, final resistance of the American forces in the town was smothered on/about 1600 hours.

One Medal of Honor (Lee Lee) and one Distinguished Service Cross (mine) were awarded for actions that day.

We were not asleep!

The last paragraph or page 135 tells how the cavalry escort lost the convoy. This is not quite true. I was the platoon leader of the cavalry platoon, and was the 200 of the escort.

Somewhere south of Ain Beda, after passing a large air field, the column was passing through a very winding road on a decided down-grade. Immediately after crossing a bridge, the 3/4 ton truck carrying General Eisenhower's baggage went out of control, rolled over, and crashed the drivers' car. I was instructed by an officer, Colonel Conway, I believe, to take care of the driver while the convoy went ahead. After we righted the truck, did what we could for the driver, the balance of the escort overtook the convoy. Using the scout car reserved for the general, I took the injured driver back to Ain Beda to a British medical facility. After receiving first aid, he was taken to Constantine, operated on, and eventually recovered.

There was one time when the General's convoy and the escort did become separated. That occurred after the meeting described on page 170. I don't believe I'll forget the incident nor the consequences of it.

The last time I had the privilege of meeting you was at Aixois, after the link-up with the forces from the south. I was the officer who delivered to you, at your Battle CP, the message from the CS of II Corps.
Lt General L. E. Truscott, Jr

20 February 1949

The above comments are made most sincerely, with full realization of the monument task of writing a book such as "Command Missions."

Sincerely,

PAUL M O'DEA
Major, Armor

---

Colonel James B Deerin
The National Guard Arm
100 Indiana Avenue Northwest
Washington 1, D.C.

23 December 1933

Dear Colonel Deerin:

I have not forgotten your request but have been trying to work on it along with two or three other things. I did get a copy of General Truscott's book and found the portion referring to Moncreval, and the General could not have been more in error. I also found another incident or two in which I was personally involved and in all cases he is not 100% correct. I will probably write to him later.

Paul Seidell wrote me earlier in the week, mentioned your letter, and asked for some information. As long as I am working on the project I am going to try to get the letter out to you now. First a question; do you have available to you any of the official historical records of the squadron for the month of September 1944, or specifically concerning Moncreval? Second, do you have available, or do you know of, a record of the investigation of the Moncreval incident? I am particularly interested in that. Such information as I have been able to obtain over the years does not tell me the exact troop or squadron dispositions or CP locations from the period 31 August to 4 September, 1944. Now that I have finally been able to obtain a good map of the area I am most interested in following up with any of the periodic reports, after action reports, and in particular a report of the investigation of the Moncreval incident. If you have any of the above I would appreciate it; or at the least, the address of where I can request it.

How to Moncreval. On Saturday 2 September 1944, as near as I can work it out on this map, the CP of troop B was in the vicinity of St Etienne du Lois. The situation was relatively quiet. The plateaus were rather extended and were in no trouble. Our CP was located in a French hunting lodge, built in the grand style. At about 2300 hours Lieutenant Colonel Hodges and Major Samuel came to our CP with instructions for "B". Major Samuel had with him a copy of the message received from corps and he gave us our mission for the next day. Briefly, as I remember it, the mission was: Going and hold Moncreval, establish road blocks on the roads leading into the town from the north, the east, and the north, so as to cut off the escape route of the 11th Panzer Division. The job looked 'hairly'. One thing I do remember is looking up from the map at Captain Wood and I seems to me that we both said, almost in unison, 'this is it!'
Troop "A" was to join us in the vicinity of our CP and be attached to "Y" for the mission. When they eventually arrived, the troop was not at full strength. The vehicles of the force refueled and resupplied at this place.

We moved out some time after midnight, probably between 0100 and 0300 3 September. All that I can remember about that part of the march is that I was devilishly tired and had a rough time staying awake. We moved by a rather leisurely route led by Lieutenant William B. Lusty and the 3d platoon to the vicinity of Harboes. I believe we hit the Harboes-Montrevel road somewhere from 1000 to 3000 yards west of Harboes and moved into Montrevel. We arrived in our objective, Montrevel, between 0530 and 0600 with no trouble.

The town was held by approximately 90 German soldiers, who were peacefully sitting outside the school house eating their breakfast. When our 3d platoon rolled in, the simplest thing to say about it is that they were surprised. There was no flight. The organization of the town began at once.

Beyond a doubt, the reason our men were treated as they were when they were finally captured was due to the treatment given the prisoners mentioned above. One of Captain Wood's strongest rules was the that no prisoner would be mistreated while in our hands. As usual, two or three of the irresponsible EM found in every organization started to strip those prisoners of their valuables, and to abuse them. The First Sergeant, the Supply Sergeant, and I, came upon the incident, stopped it, and had the men who had mistreated the prisoners taken personally, the items taken from him. The prisoners were then placed in the basement of the school, safely guarded but out of the way of any normal incident of the flight. At the end of the day when the tables were turned, the officer in charge of these men remembered how he had been cared for.

Until about 0930 or 1000 there was not much action. There was rifle and machine gun fire, and "they" were able to bring several machine guns to bear on our light vehicles which were on the Kooroe-Montrevel road (into Montrevel from the East). I saw Captain Wood once or twice during this time. I was mainly concerned with the situation in the southeast quadrant of the town. The troop CP was in the vicinity of the school house roughly in the center of town. Captain Fiddington, and Lieutenant D'Aumnnno, the observer from our assault gun battery, were there with him.

The main feature of my location was a large three story white masonry building. The ground around it was slightly higher on the sides facing the enemy, the south.

Using most of headquarters platoon and members of another platoon, the position was organized, placing machine guns and rifle-men in front of the building. We placed mortars behind it with an armored car or two in hull defiles generally behind the building.

Late in the morning things warmed up when the enemy forces began to try to get through town in earnest. There was considerable firing to the west and south of where I was, small arms, artillery, and tank fire. Two or three German armored cars made a try at moving up to the left, or east, of where I was, but were repulsed. Then they tried to work in from the south, through a small orchard and across open fields, with infantry supported by at least two Mark V tanks. From my CP in the large building I was able to slow up these attacks several times. They also attempted to put a small CP on a little knob no more than 300 yards from my position. I knocked these off with a rifle two or three times.

It was late morning or early afternoon when we were informed by Major McCarr's CP that Lieutenant Paul Siedel was being sent around to the south of town with a heavy section (3) of light tanks. His mission was to relieve the pressure on the town from the south. From where I sat it was just plain suicide. We heard his fire-fight and I saw the resulting clouds of smoke. I found out two years later that Paul's tanks contributed to the smoke.

"He" continued his push on my side of town with tanks and infantry, on at least two occasions bringing his tanks around to my left to fire on and knock out many of our vehicles on the Montrevel-Kooroe-Montrevel road. By this time the machine gun positions in front of my building no longer existed; all that was left were the mortar positions and one armor car.

During this period of several hours there were two or three times when the armor car that was left to me was forced to engage (1) Mark V tanks. Luckily for us, on all occasions except one, he either couldn't see us too well or just ignored us. On the one occasion when he didn't, after we had pulled the armor car back into its partially protected position, my radio operator, Sergeant Barsby was killed. He was the only one killed at this position.

Also, some time during the afternoon, Captain Wood sent Private Patrick Devlin, one of the older soldiers in the troop, from the CP to my position with a rifle and several 15 cm rifle grenades. Somehow or other Private Devlin made it over to where I was; despite the nasty thigh wound he had picked up on the way. Nevertheless "Paddy" was told to bring those over; he brought them. The rifle however, was useless. A bullet had struck it at the juncture of the bolt and breeching, welding it closed.

Sometime after 1630 when I was up in the CP they came at us again with tanks. At least one of the tanks picked up my CP and made it unhealthful for me to stay there any longer. I couldn't fire at the moving tanks with the mortars anyway. I went down to the ground, joined the 3 EM left there and did what we could. An armored car and one Mark IV tank with Infantry, came around the end of the house and we were cornered there. There was no place to go. One of the three men left with me, two were wounded. That was all there was. Fine!
This and what I personally know about Montrevel. Since fourteen years a lot of it is hazy but in general I will remember the main happenings for a long time. I want to add one more point of view.

In 1953 I was in Munich Germany having my automobile winterized at the exchange garage. The garage was located adjacent to the army airfield, Ober Weisenfeld, which had been the constabulary air field. A young German, old enough to have fought in WW II, was working on my car. We spoke of arm and armor units. He said he had been in armor in southern France and told some of the cities he had been through. The masses rang a bell. I asked him what unit he had been in. He said the Recon unit of the 11th Panzer division! Then I asked him if he had heard of Montrevel. He said "Oh! That no good Montrevel! # $ ! # ! ! !. Those stupid Americans inside that town don't know when they get beat. They fight too damned much." I then informed him that I knew exactly what he was talking about, because I had been one of the people inside of Montrevel while he was on the outside. He had been a scout in a recon company driving the German equivalent to our Jeep. I always thought that his comments on the town and the "stupid Americans" inside it "who didn't know when they got beat" were most enlightening and gratifying.

Sincerely,

flank and the Vosges their northern. With their flanks secure, the Germans would have the choice of defending the line of the Vosges or escaping across the Rhine. It was probable that the enemy would make some use of both escape routes. Again it was the 11th Panzer Division which was designated to hold back the pursuing VI Corps troops and keep them south of the Doubs and Saone Rivers.

At approximately 0200 hours, 3 September, a special officer-courier arrived at the Seventh Army Command Post at Brignoles with an urgent message from General Truscott. The VI Corps Commander sent an estimate of the situation: The Germans were in full retreat, very much disorganized; and delaying actions at advantageous defensive positions were all that could be expected. The VI Corps, he continued, was in contact with elements of the 11th Panzer Division in the Bourg area and on the previous day had destroyed 15 enemy tanks. In view of this situation, General Truscott requested permission to continue the "relentless pursuit" of the enemy on the axis Lons-Le-Saunier-Besancon-Belfort with the object of preventing his escape into Germany.

After a staff conference VI Corps was directed to continue the "hot pursuit" of the enemy northeastward to the Belfort Gap via Lons-Le-Saunier and Besancon. French Army B was to complete the occupation of Lyon and thereafter to push up the northwest bank of the Saone on the line Dijon-Epinal with sufficient forces detached to protect the right flank of the Seventh Army. Later, General Sir Henry Maitland Wilson also concurred, in view of the fleeing nature of the opportunity, and agreed that a regrouping of the Seventh Army in accordance with SHAPE's plans could be temporarily delayed. General Truscott lost no time in putting this directive into execution.

By 3 September the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron had reached Bourg-en-Bresse and Montrevel on Highway 78. During the night units of the 11th Panzer Division, withdrawing northward after the fight at Meximieux, entered Bourg-en-Bresse and a "free-for-all" followed. Almost all of the men of Troop B, 117th Reconnaissance Squadron, were killed or captured and their equipment lost, including 20 one-quarter ton trucks, 15 armored cars, and two light tanks. Although opposed by enemy armor and a number of heavy self-propelled
guns, Troop B had fought gallantly and succeeded in inflicting heavy losses on the Germans. The following day, the 45th Division, having destroyed enemy holding forces at Pont d'Ain, on Highway 75, and at other points southeast of the city, occupied Bourg-en-Bresse.

After the occupation of Bourg-en-Bresse, VI Corps troops temporarily lost contact with the enemy. The 45th Division spearheaded the advance through Lons-Le Saunier, Poligny, and Mouchard toward the Doubs. North of Lons-Le Saunier columns encountered numerous road obstacles. Blown bridges forced detours over muddy trails. Supply lines were extended, and transportation facilities were inadequate. Lyon was more than 70 miles to the rear; and supply depots were still on the beaches, over 250 miles away. The entire VI Corps was advancing along one main route, and traffic became so heavy that halts were necessary to gain sufficient clearance between march units.

As the Germans approached the Doubs in their retreat, they turned and made a determined effort to halt the advancing VI Corps. They apparently hoped to hold Besançon until 15 September, so that the remaining German troops in the Dijon area would be able to escape through the Belfort Gap.

Crossing the Doubs

Besançon is a fortress built by nature and improved by generations of military engineers. An industrial city of about 80,000 people, it is also a key communication and supply center. The Doubs River makes a loop around the city's industrial heart. The main approaches are solidly guarded by a huge Vauban-designed fort, La Citadelle, which in turn is supported by four minor forts: Fort Tousey on the southwest, Fort des Trois Chatels to the southeast, and on higher elevations across the river Forts Bregille and Chaudanne. These fortifications, built in the 17th century, are extremely thick-walled, surrounded by moats and utilize high ground to command all avenues of approach.

On the north bank of the river, west of the city, are Forts Rosemont and De Planoise; directly south on a steep hill stands Fort le
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IMMEDIATE

The President today awarded the Medal of Honor to First Lieutenant Daniel V. Lee, of Alma, Georgia, a platoon leader in an armored tank force of the Seventh Army, who, although he was seriously injured in the leg, eliminated two German tank emplacements and forced an armored car to withdraw in September, 1944, near Montrevel, France.

On September 2, 1944, the 117th Infantry Reconnaissance Squadron, Mechanized, spearheaded the drive of a small armored tank force which had swept through southern France. Its mission was to take and hold the town of Montrevel, France, cutting off the main road to prevent the escape of enemy troops from the Rhone Valley. Early that morning troops of the 117th and the First and Headquarters Platoons of Troop C, 1st Armored Division, advanced on the town. After a brisk fire fight the enemy坚守, composed of several officers and 72 men, surrendered. Outposts were thrown around Montrevel, and road-blocks were set up on the main road.

Shortly thereafter, strong armored elements of the German 11th Panzer Division counter-attacked in an attempt to retake the town and secure a safe route of withdrawal. This enemy force cut the road behind Montrevel, trapping the American units by cutting off their supporting infantry and tank forces located to the rear.

The attack continued throughout the morning and early afternoon. In the pitched battle, including bloody and furious hand-to-hand fighting, casualties were heavy on both sides.

Early in the afternoon with American ammunition running dangerously low, a millimeter mortar shell began falling into town. The heavy shells caused vehicle losses, and added seriously to the already heavy casualties suffered from the rifle, machine gun, mortars, and anti-tank fire encountered since the attack began. These mortars appeared to be located just a few miles on the edge of town. Lieutenant Lee, leader of Headquarters Platoon, picked a seven-man crew and set out to eliminate them.

Two members of the crew, Corporals Charles B. Stewart, Box A, Belson Avenue, Berwyn, Pennsylvania, and Corporal Marvin A. Hendrich, B.E.D. No. 1, Byron Center, Michigan, both since honorably discharged, told the story of Lieutenant Lee's action.

"He started toward the enemy position when Lieutenant Lee suddenly spotted five German riflemen on top of a hill," reported Corporal Stewart. "After a short fire we drove them away and took the hill, from where we could see two mortars. Commanded by a half-track was parked near them. Leaving the rest of us to cover his advance, Lieutenant Lee, armed with a rifle and hand grenades, crawled to within 30 yards of the vehicle, when suddenly the German saw him. Fire from a machine pistol shattered his right thigh."

"Although he couldn't use his leg at all, Lieutenant Lee continued on his mission by dragging himself along with his arms and hands," continued Corporal Hendrich. "With accurate fire from his rifle, he killed five of the mortar crew. The other two Germans were so frightened they ran."

Corporals Stewart and Hendrich reported that at this point Lieutenant Lee was severely wounded. He was captured earlier in the battle by German forces. He was found in an abandoned German tank.
Lieutenant Lee fired a round at the armored car, forcing it to cease fire and take cover. Having cleared the slope of the nearby threat, he started crawling back again using his arms to propel him, on the way the intrepid pilot kindly bestowed consciousness from extreme pain and later of his wound.

His men carried him to an aid station in a school house where first aid was rendered. When the Germans finally overran the town the next day, Lieutenant Lee was taken prisoner. Having escaped from German rule through Montpelier, Lieutenants Lee and his men withdrew back into town the next day, taking all wounded soldiers with them, but leaving behind the more seriously wounded. Lieutenant Lee was found by his comrades where the enemy had left him. He was saved by his fellow prisoners from torture and given food.

Born June 22, 1919, at Alma, Lieutenant Lee was graduated from the University of Georgia with a B.S. Degree in Agriculture in 1941, after which he was assigned to the 5th Air Corps and began his military career in Fort Riley, Kansas, later being commissioned to private first class on August 21, 1942, to corporal on September 16, 1942.

Lieutenant Lee attended Officer Candidate School at the Cavalry School, Fort Riley, graduating with the rank of second lieutenant on December 18, 1942. For his service in action in France September 3, 1944, he was awarded the Purple Heart on September 16. Promotion to the rank of first lieutenant came on March 1, 1945.

Lieutenant Lee's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Marshall Lee, live at Route 1, Mimosa, Georgia. His wife, Mrs. Selma B. Lee, makes her home at 431 Saluda Street, Rock Hill, South Carolina.

The official citation follows:

On a cloudy day, Lieutenant (then Second Lieutenant) Daniel V. Lee was leader of Headquarters Platoon, 17th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, mechanized, at Montpelier, France, September 3, 1944, when the Germans mounted a strong counterattack, isolating the town and engaging the outnumbered defenders in a pitched battle.

After the first wave had failed and our forces had withstood heavy shelling and armor-supported infantry attacks, Lieutenant Lee organized a patrol to attack the attackers which were inflicting heavy casualties on the beleaguered mechanized troops. He led the small group to the east, leading the enemy aircraft at position on a hill from which he observed seven German tanks. The large enemy tank attacked the rear of a half-tracked vehicle that had advanced ahead, the enemy tank firing at point blank range and forcing the vehicle to stop.

Carrying a rifle and grenades, he left his men on the high ground and crept to within 30 yards of the tank, where the enemy discovered him and unleashed a hail of machine gun bullets, which caused him slight injuries. He continued on foot, dodging and suffering intense pain. He ducked behind the enemy tank and opened fire, killing one of the Germans with his rifle fire, and the others fled before he reached their positions.

When he approached the rear of the German half-track, he found a tank and opened fire which neutralized this threat. Despite his wounds to both arms, he continued to fire until he was mortally wounded by direct hit. He continued firing, making the enemy tanks withdraw.

The enemy tanks withdraw and the German forces were then unable to advance further. Lieutenant Lee's courage and leadership were instrumental in the victory. He died in action on September 3, 1944.
The President of the United States takes pleasure in awarding the MEDAL OF HONOR to

FIRST LIEUTENANT DANIEL W. LEE, (then Second Lieutenant), CAVALRY
UNITED STATES ARMY

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

"Lieutenant Lee was leader of Headquarters Platoon, Troop A, 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, Mechanized, at Montrevel, France, on 2 September 1944, when the Germans mounted a strong counterattack, isolating the town and engaging its outnumbered defenders in a pitched battle. After the fight had raged for hours and our forces had withstood heavy shelling and armor-supported infantry attacks, Lieutenant Lee organized a patrol to knock out mortars which were inflicting heavy casualties on the beleaguered reconnaissance troops. He led the small group to the edge of the town, sweeping enemy riflemen out of positions on a ridge from which he observed seven Germans manning two large mortars near an armored half-track about one hundred yards down the reverse slope. Armed with a rifle and grenades, he left his men on the high ground and crawled to within thirty yards of the mortars, where the enemy discovered him and unleashed machine pistol fire which shattered his right thigh. Scorning retreat, bleeding and suffering intense pain, he dragged himself relentlessly forward. He killed five of the enemy with rifle fire, and the others fled before he reached their position. Fired on by an armored car, he dived behind the German half-track and there found a panzerfaust with which to neutralize this threat. Despite his wounds, he charged his way toward the car through withering machine gun fire, maneuvered into range and blasted the vehicle with a round from the rocket launcher, forcing it to withdraw. Having cleared the slope of hostile troops, he struggled back to his men, where he collapsed from pain and loss of blood. Lieutenant Lee's outstanding gallantry, willing risk of life and extreme tenacity of purpose in coming to grips with the enemy although suffering from grievous wounds set an example of bravery and devotion to duty in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service."
The helmeted Jersey farmer and his boy, seen in the picture, have been killed in the battle. Their bodies were found in the field where they were last seen. The driver of the farm truck was also killed. The truck was destroyed. The farmer's son was on his way to school when he was killed. The driver of the truck was on his way to market. The two men were known to be friendly and helpful to their neighbors. They were always ready to help anyone in need.

The village of Montreval was completely destroyed. The only thing that remained was a burned-out barn and a few scattered stones. The village was once a thriving community, but now it is nothing but ruins. The people who lived there are now living in camps set up by the authorities. They are trying to rebuild their lives, but it will take a long time. The government is providing them with food and shelter, but they are still in great need.

The news of the battle has spread throughout the region. People are shock and sorrow. They are proud of the men who fought bravely, but they are also sad for the families who lost loved ones. The government has announced a day of mourning for the victims of the battle. The country is in a state of mourning.

Montreval, France - Sept. 1951
Troop's Secret Unit

Essex Squadron Captured Seven Times Own Aircraft in Nazis in Southern France

In December 1944, the German army was on the defensive, and the letters were sent. News of the carnage and destruction had been received. The letters were hand-typed and delivered to the troops. The soldiers were grateful for the letters and the support. The letters were a source of hope and encouragement. The soldiers were eager to receive more letters.

Tell War Epic

DUSK IN THE RONNE VALLEY

It was December 1944, and the situation in Europe was critical. The German army was on the offensive, and the Allied forces were fighting for survival. The soldiers were exhausted, and the morale was low. The soldiers were desperate for a victory.

The evenings were long and cold, and the soldiers were forced to sleep on the ground. The soldiers were hungry and thirsty, and the food was scarce. The soldiers were tired and worn out, and the future was uncertain.

The soldiers were determined to fight until the end. They were determined to hold their ground and fight for their country. The soldiers were prepared to sacrifice everything for the protection of their loved ones.

The soldiers were grateful for the letters they received, and they were determined to fight for their country. They were determined to win the war and bring peace to their loved ones.

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The soldiers were grateful for the letters they received, and they were determined to fight for their country. They were determined to win the war and bring peace to their loved ones.
Interrogation Report

6 September 1944

Sgt Harry Staab, 2d Co, AT Bn 61, 11 Pz Div.

Preamble: The PW left his unit in the vicinity of Baums les Dames and brought back four men of the 117th Rcn Sq, who had been captured by the enemy in the town of Montrevel.

The PW's unit and attached tanks of 15 Pz Regt had been ordered to secure the withdrawal of other enemy elements through the Berg-Montrevel-Dole axis. On the night of 2 Sept., the column withdrew toward Montrevel and arrived there on the morning of 3 Sept. They were attacked from the air upon approaching the town, dispersed their vehicles and dismounted to take up the fire fight with Inf. weapons. Resistance being more severe than anticipated, it was at first believed the town had been occupied by Maquis--4 Panther tanks and a number of Hvy mortars were ordered up. One Mk IV tank also moved into lead the heavier tanks in the attack. This Mk IV, as well as 2 Rcn cars were knocked out almost immediately by our 37mm guns. As resistance increased, the enemy deployed tanks and infantry to take up the fire fight. The battle lasted approximately eight hours, at which time our troops were forced to surrender, due to superiority in enemy weapons and armor. PW states that German officers and men were surprised when they learned that only two Rcn troops had held the town. Special orders were issued to treat our men well out of respect for "their heroic and well conducted battle."

Misc: PW saw 60 Panther tanks of the 15th Pz Regt in Lyon on 1 Sept. He described the breakthrough and withdrawal from Montelimar as "orderly." The 11th PD is now heading for Mulhausen.

J. F. Rieger
Captain, Cavalry

A copy of the above Interrogation Report was given to me for my file. This is a copy of it.

John L. Wood
Lt.-Col. Armor
U. S. A.R.

12 September 1959

Part 4 - The Drive To The Vosges Mountains

As a result of the Montreval Action, the Squadron had lost the entire Troop "P" and most of Troop "A". The Tank Troop had every tank destroyed or badly damaged. It was necessary to organize the Squadron into six combat sections, each section consisted of two armored cars, three Jeeps and a Platoon of Infantry, who were on temporary assignment from the 45th Inf. Div.

In this manner, the Squadron continued their combat operations, assigned the mission of screening the 3rd Inf. Div., continued their aggressive attack against the German 19th Army.

Our pursuit of the enemy was on the axis Besancon, Arbois and North to the River Saone and closely operating with the 1st French Army. Along the way, many Allied Air Force Pilots were liberated, after parachuting from their damaged bombers and fighter planes.

On September 12, 1944, now assigned to the 36th Inf. Div., we attacked toward the large town of Voscel. Enemy resistance had stiffened, and our casualties increased as our advance was pressed with strong determination.

In the meantime, replacements arrived and reorganization of Troops "A" and "P" proceeded. Complete organization of the Squadron was accomplished by early October with all armor cars and tanks replaced and ready for combat.

The Squadron advanced north toward the City of Epinal as the American Third Army under General Patton, advanced East in an attempt to trap the German 19th Army.

On September 18, 1944, a group of British Red Devils who had parachuted three months before with several Jeeps, were contacted and they joined up with the Squadron Forces. They were remarkable fighting soldiers and their stories of their exploits against the enemy, mainly the killing of high ranking German Officers were an outstanding episode in the liberation of France. The British Captain Commanding the Red Devils was killed a few weeks later leading his men in a skirmish with the Germans. A truly brave and utterly courageous officer.

General Patch, Commander of the American Seventh Army was a frequent visitor to Squadron Headquarters for a briefing on the up-to-date combat situation. He indicated that our battle information and enemy intelligence was the most up-to-date tactical information within the entire Seventh Army. In fact, General Patch stated that this vital information normally took three days to reach his Headquarters. As a result, he assigned a staff Colonel to report each morning to our Headquarters and return to Army with all up-to-date tactical information, reporting directly to the General.
Finally the gap between the Normandy forces was closed when patrols of Troop "B" contacted advanced elements of the 1st Spahis Regiment of the 2nd French Armor Division of the 3rd American Army. Thus on September 16, 1944 the Allied Forces who landed on the beaches at Normandy and those from Southern France joined forces and the Allies had an unbroken line from Holland to the Swiss border.

The Squadron continued its determined advances, help capture Epinal and crossed the Mezelle River and reached the foothills of the Vosges Mountains.

By the close of September, the Squadron held the line from Secofur to Rambervilliers. We were to maintain these positions for several weeks as the Germans had developed strong defensive positions in the mountains and it was extremely difficult to dislodge them.

Our advance against the German Forces from the Riviera Beaches in Southern France was swift and triumphant. Due to great boldness and driving initiative, we made many great and sweeping gains and had fought almost four hundred miles to reach the Vosges Mountains.

Unfortunately, the cost was high in loss of Officers and enlisted men. Also, much equipment was destroyed by enemy action, but despite every type of obstacle, the men of the 127th Mech. Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron responded magnificently.

At this point in time, due to our stationary position at Secoer, I was able to write about the heroic exploits of the gallant men of the Squadron and the leading part that they played in helping to liberate a large area of Southern France and which earned the Squadron the Award of the French Croix Du Guerre with Palm, from a grateful French Government.

The enclosed article, "The Knights of the Yellow Cord (Cavalry) was written for and dedicated to the Officers and men of the Squadron who, by their valor and devotion to duty, made the supreme sacrifice for their Country.
In the cold light which will follow the dawn of peace, upon the cessation of hostilities of the great conflict of World War II, a close study and thorough analysis of the part each respective branch of service of the American Army played in bringing to a successful conclusion the war against Germany, will reveal the important role that mechanized cavalry contributed toward final victory.

Rarely, indeed, does one read in the daily communiques or press dispatches, the accomplishments and fighting qualities of the intrepid men of the mechanized cavalry in their daily performance of reconnoitering well ahead of the front lines, probing the enemy’s strength. In modern warfare, the fast moving, hard hitting armored cars and tanks are the elements which first contact the enemy. It can truly be said that the wearers of the yellow cord of the mechanized cavalry, lead the Queen into battle.

Relatively speaking, the mechanized cavalry of the American Army is one of the newest branches of service and received its first baptism of fire in the Tunisian campaign. In the early days of building the American army, shortly after the fall of France in June, 1940, from a small standing army, mechanized cavalry was still in its infancy. However, the High Command at that time wisely decided that in a modern war of machines, there would be little use for horse cavalry. The basic tactics of cavalry remained fundamentally sound in principle and needed only to substitute modern mechanized vehicles capable of rapid cross-country maneuverability and speed, possessed with strong fire power and equipped with long range high power radio communications, in place of the gallant steeds of a bygone
era.

In 1941 several horse cavalry regiments were converted into mechanized units, trained and participated in many large scale maneuvers, developing a high standard of proficiency. During this early stage, there was molded a limited number of hard hitting mechanized cavalry squadrons, equipped with fast armored cars, hard hitting speedy light tanks and heavy caliber assault guns, highly mechanized and capable of operating deep within enemy lines or on their flanks, probing out the enemy's defenses.

By necessity, therefore, mechanized cavalry became one of the newest branches of the service, and as a result little is known by the American public of the exploits of the mechanized cavalry squadrons and their contributions in the campaigns of Tunisia, Sicily, Italy and now France. Being few in number and small in size, they appear lost in the background of the accomplishments of infantry and armored divisions, the artillery, engineers and air corps. But yet it is the mechanized cavalry which furnishes the highly valuable information of the enemy's strength and dispositions, permitting the employment of all these elements in a sound plan of attack. They are more often referred to as reconnaissance elements. In France there has been one unit which has distinguished itself in true cavalry tradition, contributing greatly to the rapid advance made by the American 7th Army in their push northward from the beaches of southern France.

This unit, its background dating back to the Revolutionary War days and steeped deep with cavalry tradition, was one of the first mechanized cavalry reconnaissance squadrons to sail overseas. Already it has traveled in seven foreign countries over a period of more than two years. Its members wear the battle stars for participation in the campaigns of Tunisia, Sicily, Italy and southern France.

It is believed that this squadron was the first one of its kind to land intact on "D" Day of a large scale invasion. The entire unit was landed on the beaches with elements of the assault waves when the 7th Army invaded the southern coast of France.

Taking advantage of its rapid mobility and self-sustaining long range operation, it soon had penetrated deep into southern France and more than 150 miles behind the German lines. This rapid advance placed it well forward of its supporting infantry and artillery.

The operations of this unit in their thrust north through the Rhone Valley will prove to be one of the scenes in the annals of modern military history, when the final story can be fully revealed.

At this time, however, it can be revealed that the caliber of men, their esprit de corps and their traditions have molded this unit into one of the outstanding fighting outfits of the 7th Army. Their splendid accomplishments and deeds of valor on the battlefield are bywords among fighting men in France.

The "Recon of Battle," the fighting doughboy of some of the most seasoned and battle tested American divisions now operating in France, looks with respect upon the fighting "Recons" who lead them into battle. There is no more encouraging sight to the doughboy than to see the mechanized cavalrymen out in front of them, probing the enemy's defenses and testing his strength. They fight side by side, the "Recons" ready to exploit the breakthrough, supported by their tanks, armored cars and assault guns.

These are no ordinary fighting soldiers, but the most highly trained specialists and versatile fighting men of the ground forces today. They are proficient tank and armored car drivers, expert gunners, skilled radio operators, artillerymen with heavy caliber assault weapons, highly trained as engineers in removing enemy mine fields and booby traps, preparing demolitions and building improvised bridges. Their auxiliary weapons include
mortars, light and heavy, anti-tank guns, bazookas, anti-aircraft guns and all types of automatic machine guns. Every type of personal arms, from pistols, SMGs, rifles, carbines, rifle and carbine grenades and trenching knives are carried by the individuals.

One must wonder why such a display of fire power and skilled specialists is concentrated within so small a unit. When properly employed in exploiting a tactical situation, the mechanized cavalry will often operate deep behind the enemy's lines and must be self sustaining in all supporting weapons, to insure a degree of success against a bewildered enemy. This has occurred many times in France and the all around teamwork and versatility developed to a new high standard, only attained by the American soldier, struck staggering harassing blows against the 19th German Army in their tragic retreat into Germany from the southern coast of France.

The Squadron, fresh from its battle-scarred campaign in Italy, where it made the remarkable advance of over 260 miles in less than forty days, north from Cassino, prepared itself for the invasion of southern France.

Elaborate and painstaking plans were prepared for the employment of the troops, including the innovation of landing mechanized vehicles with the second assault waves. Battle tested, with supreme confidence in their ability, complete faith in their equipment and vehicles, the Squadron sailed with a great armada to attempt to gain another foothold on the so-called impregnable "Fortress of Europe."

The ships in convoy formation, under the watchful eye of the Navy's sea dogs of many Allied Nations and an air cover of fighters scoured the skies ahead to prevent the enemy from discovering the approach of this great invasion army, sailed majestically toward its goal.

The scene enacted aboard the invasion fleet consisting of every type of landing craft, was one of complete confidence, notwithstanding the dangerous mission ahead.

The majority of the officers and men were seasoned veterans of Tunisia, Sicily and Italy and had also participated in several invasions on hostile shores. To those who search into the men's souls in an attempt to discover what reactions Zero hour meant to them, there appeared an indifference to the dangers ahead. They appeared to possess an attitude of faith in their proven ability as the finest fighting men in the world. Their job was to crack another opening in the so-called impenetrable wall and join forces with the gallant men of the Allied armies who landed on the Normandy beaches.

Together, side by side, they would continue their advance toward Berlin and destroy the last vestige of Nazism and let the world once again enjoy a new light of freedom from oppression.

In the early mists of "D" Day, there appeared in the distance the hostile shores of Southern France. Already the naval guns had begun to spend their destructive fury upon the enemy's fortifications and installations. Amidst the crescendo of hundreds of naval guns was added the full weight of our bombers who dropped their lethal loads with uncaring aim. The skies were dotted by the might of our air force.

This awe-inspiring scene of gun flashes from sea and the leaping flames on shore attested to the strength of our forces. Already, too, thousands of daring paratroopers and glider-borne troops had landed behind the enemy's lines.

Zero hour approached; men made last minute preparations. An early breakfast had been served and now the men gripped their rifles a little tighter. Complete confidence pervaded the atmosphere. Had we not tested the best the enemy had to offer on other battlefields and found that he was not the superman he would have us believe? With confidence and faith born of bitter battle experience, the men of this gallant 7th Army climbed aboard
their assault boats and sailed for the beaches of southern France.

The full weight of the terrible fire power from the hundreds of naval ships laid their final curse upon the assault beaches and before the smoke had cleared, American boys had a toehold on the beach. The most difficult part of the job had been accomplished; it was only necessary now to meet the enemy on equal terms. With determination and a will to engage the enemy, the assault waves drove relentlessly forward. Behind followed wave after wave and among these were the fighting mechanized cavalry, their vehicles poised and ready to locate the main strength of the enemy and contact the paratroopers inland.

The enemy dazed by the weight of shells and bombs, and caught by surprise, soon gave way to our determined efforts.

Contact was established with the airborne troops and with possible assistance from the valiant patriots of Fighting France, a firm beachhead was established. Without waiting for a breathing spell, the "Recons" pushed on, their advance so rapid that by "D" plus 3, a patrol captured the German Corps Commander, a Lieutenant General, with his entire staff. He was dazed by our speed and bold fighting qualities and shakily surrendered.

A situation had developed that was every true cavalryman’s dream, an exploitation deep into the enemy’s line to harass his communications, take advantage of his disorganized forces as they beat a hasty retreat toward Germany. A golden opportunity that few parallels in this war, was in the offering.

Thus, on "D" plus 3, this highly mobile mechanized cavalry squadron had penetrated the outer defenses of the enemy and was free to roam within the enemy lines at will. By the close of the first day more than fifty miles were gained and many towns and villages liberated from the yoke of the oppressor.

The scenes enacted by these liberated French peoples, who welcomed us with uncontrolled emotion will forever remain vivid among the memories of the men of the Squadron. Their genuine greetings of welcome, some with tears in their eyes from sheer joy, others extending their typical French greeting of kissing both cheeks, a novelty to the American boys, were scenes to be enacted hundreds of times in the advance toward the German border.

The enemy lost one of his greatest weapons in being prevented from destroying key bridges and vital communication centers. The advance moved with such momentum that the best the Germans hoped for was to escape with their lives. The knowledge that we had penetrated so deeply, already a hundred miles by "D" plus 5, left him in a bewildered state. His lack of knowledge of our whereabouts had him confused; it was not certain what routes of escape remained open or when his supply lines would be cut or harassed.

Never before in modern warfare had a hard hitting fast moving mobile force possessed with the finest long range radio communication been permitted to roam at will against a disorganized army bent on retreat through a hostile country.

The patriots, or Maquis as they are referred to, encouraged by the presence of American forces, became bolder in their destruction and retaliation against isolated German garrisons. Their cause was justified by the exploitation of their land by the occupying German forces. The enemy’s ruthless manner of retaliation on hostages, the willful destruction of French homes, their livestock, and finally the shipping to Germany of the bulk of the agricultural products of an already famished land, added to the hate and wrath stored up within their souls.

With the coming of the invading American forces, it was the signal for these fighting patriots who had lived in the hills many long months, to come out in the open. Already they were organized into compact groups by districts.
ably led by former French army officers who had escaped in the fall of France. They were fairly well armed with weapons supplied by the Allies from the air, and supplemented by captured German equipment.

It was through the able assistance of these patriots that the Squadron was furnished with the most up-to-date intelligence of the dispositions of the German forces. Guides were furnished who knew every hidden trail and by-pass which led around destroyed bridges and enemy strong points.

On one occasion when a bridge was destroyed a few hours before our arrival, the local Maquis chief had assembled sufficient men to construct a ford, permitting the Squadron to continue an uninterrupted advance.

There were many instances when groups of Germans would offer to surrender to the Americans, if they could be guaranteed they would not be turned over to the local patriots. Often the enemy, when encountered by the Squadron, believed they were being attacked by patriots, deeming it impossible that American troops had penetrated so deep in so short a time.

The penetration had reached a distance of 185 miles from the original landing on the beachhead only a short time before. The rate of advance surpassed all expectations and hundreds of towns had been liberated.

It was now a question of maintaining supply lines through hostile territory. Many enemy strong points were by-passed, from which our supply vehicles could easily be attacked. Again the patriots proved their valuable assistance by guarding and securing bridges and protecting our slim line of communication for our column. The men of the Squadron realized by now this history-making exploit and were keenly alert to the dangers.

This sudden thrust had carried the Squadron deep into hostile territory and it became apparent that in the very near future the bulk of the enemy's retreating force could be encountered.

As yet, the majority of our enemy contacts consisted of engaging German garrisons which were defending the larger villages and towns. In every instance the enemy was caught by surprise in these towns, bewildered by our sudden advance and audacity of attack. Their communications had been so disrupted that their whereabouts were never known until the leading vehicles of the Squadron contacted the outer defenses of the enemy's garrisons. These defenses in the majority of cases were only partly manned.

An outstanding example of the element of surprise was when our forward forces advanced on the largest town yet encountered. One leading patrol observed a small group of enemy organized in position. The patrol leader called for artillery fire and before forty rounds had been fired, observed a white flag of surrender. Knowing the tactics of the Germans when offering to surrender, he sent forward five light tanks to approach this group. To the amazement of the tank leader, the German officer in charge stated that his commanding officer was willing to surrender the entire garrison. The offer was accepted and to the astonishment of everyone, the garrison totaled 1500 Germans.

Thus this larger sized force of enemy surrendered to an American force of less than 100 troops. It was ascertained that our patrols had overrun the outer defenses; it was Sunday afternoon and the majority of the German troops were relaxing. The German commander to the best of his knowledge believed that the Americans were not within a hundred miles of this sector. Finally, when our artillery fire loaded, he believed that the town was being attacked by a superior force and decided to surrender.

From this latest success, we turned west toward the Rhone River, where it was believed that the retreating forces of the shattered 19th German Army was retreating north through the Rhone Valley.

This was soon ascertained and our assumption was correct, for our column ran head-on against the retreating enemy column. The valley road on the east
bank of the Rhone River was the last escape route remaining open to the Germans, all bridges across the Rhone River having previously been destroyed by our Air Force.

The German high command was determined to escape with the bulk of his forces and attacked with elements of the 11th Panzer Division to hold off our harassing blows against his flanks. Our forces were greatly inferior to this German armor, but his lack of knowledge of our strength and the element of surprise in our favor, delayed the advance of the leading elements of the German Army for several days. The enemy probed his right flank to ascertain our dispositions and strength and finally determined how small a force was blocking and harassing the retreat of an entire army.

However, his delay was fatal, for by this time the leading elements of the 7th Army had rushed north, its route paved by this gallant mechanized cavalry squadron of only several hundred men. By the lightning thrust of this daring and remarkable exploit, brilliantly executed, into the heart of France, it made possible the fastest advance made by a modern army in World War II.

The Squadron was soon supported by the bulk of the American forces who originally landed on the beaches of southern France and the 10th German Army suffered a most humiliating defeat. For five days his column was attacked at close range by every type of weapon in the American army. At night the enemy's columns would travel three abreast, going in the same direction on the main road north. Not daring to move during daylight hours, his concentrations in bivouacs were subject to devastating fire by our artillery and air force, who enjoyed afield day.

The sight of this retreating German army, heading pell-mell toward Germany in disastrous route was no doubt a shattering blow to the enemy's morale, causing thousands of the enemy to surrender. The majority of their transport had been destroyed, civilian cars and trucks were requisitioned from the French. They lacked gasoline, which resulted in horses pulling every type of vehicle, and the majority of the soldiers were walking or riding pilfered bicycles.

It was necessary for this column to ford the Rhone River at three places and our artillery was registered on these points. At night when the enemy attempted these crossings, our batteries fired their lethal loads upon the helpless column.

Finally, the last escape route was cut and thousands of prisoners were captured, along with columns of enemy material of every description. Shocked from the murderous fire of our guns and the weight of our Air Force, practically starved, it was indeed a sad commentary for the "Master Race." The carnage that remained blocked the roads for miles. Every type of German combat vehicle was represented, hundreds of dead horses with horse-drawn artillery pieces destroyed, many French civilian cars were abandoned for lack of fuel. The battle area was literally strewn with the bulk of the vehicles of the escaping German forces, a complete mass of wreckage, attesting to the destructive power of American equipment.

Resuming its rapid advance, the Squadron in a 150 mile right and sweep, outstripping its supporting infantry and artillery, again contacted the leading elements of the retreating 10th German Army as they were nearing the German border, harassing his flanks with lightning stabs, forcing the enemy column to retreat along his planned axis of escape. The remaining escape routes toward Germany were fast dwindling, and it became apparent that it would soon be necessary to defend in strength the narrowing avenues remaining open, if the Germans expected to reach the border.

Already the threat of the American 3rd Army, racing from the Normandy beachhead toward the left flank of this enemy column, threatened to cut this
mountainous terrain and pitch darkness, the initial attack was launched. The element of surprise was in our favor and within an hour, all resistance had been overcome and the entire garrison were taken prisoner.

Immediate steps were taken to consolidate defenses and cover the avenues of approach leading toward the town, in expectation of the enemy's reaction to the loss of this vital point. Hardly had the initial preparations been completed when the town was in turn attacked by the enemy, in force. The Germans appeared determined to retake the town and launched a tank attack, supported by infantry of the Panzer Grenadiers. Our forces met the initial enemy assault with every weapon available and when the smoke had cleared, the cavalrymen still held tenaciously to their positions. It was apparent that elements of a Panzer Division were attacking, and they soon launched a second assault. Our light armored cars and tanks were no match against the enemy's Mark V tanks, but by superior marksmanship, determination and sheer guts, the enemy attack was again repulsed. For several hours the battle continued; the enemy was building up superior strength while our own reinforcements were rushing up. However, as in the past, we were operating fifty miles beyond our nearest infantry support and it became a race against time to reach this fearless force of Americans who were holding off a superior force of armor and infantry.

The enemy's determination became increasingly stronger with the intensity of his attacks, while our own force suffered severe losses in material and personnel. Nevertheless the town was held eight hours after the Germans initially attacked in force. By skillful leadership, employment of the combined weapons, utilizing the maximum fire power, superb fighting qualities of the individual soldiers and a resolute determination of purpose in keeping with the highest traditions of the service, these men of the mechanized cavalry withstood the ferocious attacks of a large force.
of a German Panzer Division.

Individual heroism became commonplace. Light armored cars plugged it out with enemy Mark V tanks at point-blank range, fighting with determined skill and superb marksmanship. These gallant American soldiers exacted a terrific toll. Soon ammunition became exhausted, but fortunately a loaded German ammunition truck had been captured earlier. Making full use of the enemy’s hand grenades and explosives, they continued the battle.

It became apparent that our infantry reinforcements would not arrive in time. To alleviate the pressure on the heroic defenders of the town, a tank attack was launched. Striking from two directions, the fast driving light tanks drove toward town and engaged the enemy. Firing their guns with rapid speed against the enemy’s superior heavier tanks, they temporarily diverted the pressure against their comrades. However, the superiority of the enemy’s armor was in their favor and our forces retired with their remaining tanks.

With ammunition exhausted, no food or water available and many wounded in need of medical aid, completely surrounded by an overwhelming force of the enemy, the American commander maintained he could hold out if reinforcements would arrive.

On the outside every effort was made to reach the besieged town with reinforcements. Once too often these gallant mechanized cavalrymen were to make a daring attack against unsurmountable odds and pay a high price for the attempt.

Before reinforcements arrived, the enemy closed in and after the most furious battle of the campaign, the conflict ended. Having fought valiantly against a foe possessing seven times the strength, supported by heavy tanks of a Panzer Division, the enemy acknowledged the courage and superior fighting qualities of these Americans by issuing special orders that they be treated with special privilege. The enemy shared his rations and cigarettes as a token of his respect for these fighting men, who fought to the end against such numerical strength.

What has been described in this narrative only lightly tells of the deeds and accomplishments of a few intrepid American fighting men of the mechanized cavalry. On other battlefields, their deeds and acts of valor continue with the same spirit and with the highest traditions of the Cavalry. Those men a few years ago gave up their horses reluctantly to ride the iron steeds of a modern mechanized war. The spirit that has prevailed through the glorious traditions of the past, still lives as “The Knights of the Yellow Cord” seek out the foe and lead our armies into battle.
flank of the French rear near Chagny. The attack was unsuccessful and cost the Germans 400 killed and 30 prisoners. Fanning out, the 1st French Infantry Division outflanked Autun, some 20 miles west of Chagny, from the north and had cleared the town by the end of the day.

Troops of the French II Corps raced to meet the American XV Corps of the Third Army. Only 25 miles separated the French from Dijon, and the fall of this important city would not only cut the chief enemy escape route but also outflank the Doubs line. On 9 September French armored elements reached a point on Highway 74 almost midway between Beaune and Dijon. Here the Germans attempted to hold firm and halt the advance. Another counterattack was launched into the flank of II Corps. However, this attempt failed and cost the Germans over 300 killed and many captured. An estimated 300 vehicles and 12 guns of different calibers were destroyed.

Seventh and Third Armies Join Forces

Dijon was invested and liberated by the 1st French Armored Division on 10 September. The Germans did not attempt to defend the city, and the capital of Burgundy fell into Allied hands undamaged. On their right flank the French contacted the 117th Cavalry of VI Corps at Autonne, north of Dole, thereby establishing a continuous army front. During the night of 10-11 September an armored reconnaissance group operating west of Dijon met a patrol from the 2nd French Armored Division of the American Third Army. The meeting at Sombernon linked the Normandy front with that of southern France. Whether the trap was now closed, however, it was difficult to say. Large enemy forces were reported to be still west of Dijon.

The following day, 11 September, French II Corps armor continued to push northeast toward Langres. The infantry established a static defense line west of Dijon and prepared for any future enemy attempt to break out of the closing trap. Reconnaissance elements pushed out to the northwest of the Dijon-Langres highway.

At 0700 hours on 12 September, reconnaissance troops of the 1st French Infantry Division linked in force with an armored regiment
Reckless Recs

FRENCH CENTER

No. 100
Founded on the Ambo Beachhead
Sunday, October 15, 1944

The Stars and Stripes

THE STARS AND STRIPES

Reckless Recs

First Men

Of 7th To Reach Moselle

With the Allied Army advancing westward, the 7th Infantry Division made a swift move across France. The division consisted of several regiments, each with its own strength and equipment. The 7th Infantry Division proved to be a formidable force, and their rapid advance contributed to the overall success of the Allied forces.

Front

and Center

Unusual KIND

T-9 Tracked biplane

The T-9 Tracked biplane, a unique aircraft designed for reconnaissance missions, was used by the 7th Infantry Division. Its twin-tined design allowed for greater agility and better visibility, making it an ideal tool for scouting operations.

Veterans Hit Riviera Beaches

Up From the Sea

To Threaten Reich

Germans Hit Ashore D-Day

'The Yanks Are Coming'

'The Yanks Are Coming'

"You Did It," General Truscott

Says in Tribute to Troops

TO THE OFFICERS AND MEN

OF THE Y.C.S.

In the bright, blue sky of the early morning of the 14th of August, you found the 7th Division, the 9th Division, and the 10th Division, all of them fighter-bombers, preparing for a day of intense combat. The 7th Division led the charge, advancing towards their objectives with determination and courage.

Preparations

Personnel and equipment were gathered together in secret, and the plan was revealed to only those involved. The day began with a surprise attack, with the 7th Division leading the way. Their advance was swift and relentless, and they continued to move forward with unwavering resolve.

The story of the 7th Infantry Division's crossing of the Moselle and their subsequent advance towards the Riviera is one of courage and perseverance. Their efforts were not in vain, as their presence along the coastline served as a strong deterrent to the German forces.
Looking Back

Over Our Shoulder

Potted at random from the files of the BrainNews, looking for the over the road show inventors invents the "Slingshot" as well as the "Tin Man" or "Duece" D-4D.

A notable character, who was supposed to be a British tank driver, appeared in a Queen Mary event in the hands of the "Duece" D-4D. The "Tin Man" or "Duece" D-4D, which was supposed to be a British tank driver, appeared in a Queen Mary event in the hands of the "Duece" D-4D. The "Tin Man" or "Duece" D-4D, which was supposed to be a British tank driver, appeared in a Queen Mary event in the hands of the "Duece" D-4D.

The liberator

A small French garrison, under the command of a native American soldier, was relieved by the British garrison in the hold of the British merchant ship. The British merchant ship arrived at the target, and after an initial bombardment, the British merchant ship continued its advance. The British merchant ship arrived at the target, and after an initial bombardment, the British merchant ship continued its advance. The British merchant ship arrived at the target, and after an initial bombardment, the British merchant ship continued its advance. The British merchant ship arrived at the target, and after an initial bombardment, the British merchant ship continued its advance.

Night Patrol

A small French garrison, under the command of a native American soldier, was relieved by the British garrison in the hold of the British merchant ship. The British merchant ship arrived at the target, and after an initial bombardment, the British merchant ship continued its advance. The British merchant ship arrived at the target, and after an initial bombardment, the British merchant ship continued its advance. The British merchant ship arrived at the target, and after an initial bombardment, the British merchant ship continued its advance. The British merchant ship arrived at the target, and after an initial bombardment, the British merchant ship continued its advance.

Believe It or Not

A First Sergeant, a Sergeant of a Corps, was found with a box of cigarettes and a box of matches. The box of cigarettes was found with a box of matches and a box of matches. The box of cigarettes was found with a box of matches and a box of matches. The box of cigarettes was found with a box of matches and a box of matches.

Friendly Tip

A native American soldier, who was supposed to be a British tank driver, appeared in a Queen Mary event in the hands of the "Duece" D-4D. The "Tin Man" or "Duece" D-4D, which was supposed to be a British tank driver, appeared in a Queen Mary event in the hands of the "Duece" D-4D. The "Tin Man" or "Duece" D-4D, which was supposed to be a British tank driver, appeared in a Queen Mary event in the hands of the "Duece" D-4D. The "Tin Man" or "Duece" D-4D, which was supposed to be a British tank driver, appeared in a Queen Mary event in the hands of the "Duece" D-4D.
Traditions From Valley Forge
Once New Jersey Ist Cavalry

Ready For Anything

A General in a Jeep...
Part 5. Through the Vosges Mountains

In October 1944 the Squadron was stationed in a quaint French Village of Seceur, France as we began the third year over seas. Our journey has brought us to England, Scotland, Gibraltar, Algiers, Tunisia, French Morocco, Sicily, Italy, Southern France and now approaching the plains before Strasbourg and Alsace - Lorraine.

Mail was catching up after our fast dash from the south where we rarely stayed in the same place more than twenty four hours. Captian Kennedy, the Skipper of the T.S.S. Granville W. Dodge, our farewell correspondent with a vivid style of writing. Attached is a typical letter received in October, 1944 after several delays through the Rhone Valley.

The first edition of "Beachhead News" published by France with VI Corp., was issued on October 15, 1944, and this issue describes the Squadron's operations from the beaches of Southern France to the foothills of the Vosges Mountains.

As the "Recon-eyes of VI Corp.", the Squadron preceded every advance of the Corp from the beaches to the Vosges Mountains. The edition "Beachhead News" attached, vividly describes our combat operations as armored reconnaissance troops.

On October 10, 1944, Major McGarry departed from the Squadron to be hospitalized in Seceur, France and was not to return to duty. I was promoted to Executive Officer and second in Command. After twenty-three months as the operations officer (S-3) I was now to assume greater responsibilities and prepare myself for possibly future command of the Squadron in the event anything happened to Col. Dodge. See copy of S.O. #107 dated 10th of October 1944, attached.

The Rev. Thomas Theodore Butler was another faithful correspondent who wrote truly beautiful letters with an added dimension of much news about Lucille. His letters had great meaning and I looked forward with keen anticipation in reading them most interesting letters. As one moves closer to the top of Command, the onus of the position becomes and such letters somehow contribute immeasurably in helping to bridge this gap. Attached is another example of Rev. Butler's letters, dated October 25, 1944 with a description of a poem entitled "A Mother's Prayer".

During the defensive lull before the Vosges Mountains, there was a great occasion when fourteen N.C.O.'s of the Squadron were given on the spot battlefield Commission in the Infantry and assigned to various Divisions as Platoon Leaders.

Light patrols continued to prove each evening to maintain a degree of pressure on the defensive positions of the Germans. We still suffered casualties, and on one occasion a mortar barrage caught a mess line of "S" Troops and there were twenty-eight casualties, some serious.

-118-
Finally on November 1, 1944 we once again moved to the attack and in coordination with French Forces successfully liberated the Town of Baccarat. Our Headquarters was set up in the famous Chrystal Factory of Baccarat. The owner was so grateful that his buildings had been spared from damage, that he presented Col. Hodge and myself with a beautiful collection of over eighty Chrystal Glasses of five sizes and two types of wine decanters. We were both fortunate to be able to ship this valuable chrystal home intact, where it is still in use today.

Hard fighting again became the order of the day, as the Seventh Army Units attempted to dislodge the Germans from the Vosges Mountains. Our advance through heavy dense woods and muddy roads was delayed many times, but not withstand the hardships of cold weather, snow and rain the attack was aggressively pressed forward.

The Towns of Vacqueville and Merville was soon liberated. The 100th Inf. Div. engaged in combat for the first time and the Squadron was attached to the Division. Fighting continued on a hard scale but soon Pemonne fell and we advanced toward Neuve-maisons which was strongly defended. With support of medium tanks from the 753rd Tank Bn., Troop "E" entered the Town on November 15, 1944.

The Squadron was now fighting harder than at any time since engaged in combat. The Germans were surprisingly strong and stubborn and gave very little ground. They finally retreated only against Superior Fire Power and Great Fighting Spirit. Ol' Yeller was desperately fought for and a high price was paid for each advance.

An interesting note at this point of time is a copy of an Intelligence Report from the German 19th Army Newspaper "Die Wacht" which gives an account of their retreat up the Rhone Valley. It provides a real insight as to the Germans Tactics and a style of their propaganda efforts.

Our third "Thanksgiving Day" overseas was observed with some notice, although everyone was too occupied staying alive and warm. On this day, a half track returning with men from the Squadron's Rest Center, hit a land mine near our Headquarters, killing two and seriously injuring two others. A sad day to remember.

Lately, it appears that we have been taking a large number of prisoners, many simply giving up with safe conduct passes. The Town of Pulbach was soon occupied and the Squadron now attached to the Third Infantry Division. It was now planned to attack the City of Strasbourg, the Capital City of Alsace and a German stronghold on the Rhine River. The attack was launched on November 27, 1944 along with the 2nd French Armor Division, who recklessly advanced at great speed and quickly overran the German outposts.

Part 6. The Battle For Alsace-Lorraine

The German defenders of Strasbourg were completely surprised by the audacity of our aggressive attack and fell back across the Rhine River completely disorganized. The City was completely in Allied hands by nightfall of November 27, 1944 and Germans were surrendering in small groups, in a bewildered state.

On several occasions, I led small combat groups to houses were the owners indicated Nazis were hiding out. In one home, to our total amazement, twenty seven German Officers came out of a cellar when I threatened to toss a hand grenade, in the belief there were only two or three camp taggers. Somehow I was at my best in this type of envirement, leading soldiers, in cleaning out the last remnants of the German defenders of Strasbourg.

The Cross of Lorraine always had a deep and abiding meaning to me. The Liberation of Strasbourg, the heart of Lorraine, had special significance and it was sheer delight rounding up the hundreds of Germans holed up throughout the City. By daylight the Squadron alone had over 1,500 prisoners.

After three days of organizing our defenses in the City, the Squadron attacked north along the Western side of the Rhine. Strong patrols were maintained at night, particularly near the many tributaries, to prevent German Patrols from crossing from their East Banks.

Enemy resistance north of Strasbourg stiffened and the Squadron was engaged in the heaviest fighting to date. Fifteen miles north of the City are two important crossing towns, Kilstett and Gumseheim.

Many times we fired across the Rhine River against German soil, protecting our flank along the Rhine. Finally on December 8, 1944 Gumseheim was occupied with assistance of a Battalion of Infantry from the Third Division.

Patrolling the Rhine became difficult due to high rising waters. At night we used Dukw's, which are large floating trucks, as outposts along the river and smashed several German Patrols trying to make a foothold.

Two incidents occurred shortly after advancing north from Strasbourg. While fighting our way into the City, suddenly found ourselves mixed in with a French Unit. The commanding Officer, a French Lt. Col., was highly pleased to meet up with an American Cavalry Officer and was totally surprised of my Cavalry background. He asked for the Cavalry insignia of Cross Sebera, which I was wearing which was gladly presented to him.

Five days later, he searched his Battalion of Infantry, fifteen miles to my Headquarters, where, in full Ceremonial Formation, he presented to me a beautiful framed etching of the Strasbourg Cathedral with the following inscription in French.
To Major Samnel
In Fond Rememberance From An Officer Of
The French Cavalry
Strasbourg 10 December - 1944
"Cavalry Forever"

This etching hangs in our Recreation Room as a warm reminder of a more pleasant interlude of the War.

This incident occurred in the Town of Souffle Weirsheim, Alsace where I was also given a six weeks old Male German Police Dog puppy as was Col. Hodge. I named my puppy "Spur" which was the code name of our Squadron. Col. Hodge named his dog "Sambo" which I always suspected was named after me, as he fondly called me "Janney" and continues to do so to this day.

"Spur" was to remain my constant companion throughout the War and subsequently returned home with me. He lived until 1956, long enough for both my children to have fond memories of the most wonderful dog a man could cherish.

The Squadron was assigned to the 79th Division on December 10, 1944, and I reported to the C.Q. for instructions, as Col. Hodge had taken a ten day leave for Paris and I was acting Squadron Commander. This Division's insignia Co. incidentally was the Cross of Lorraine.

The weather in December 1944 was cold, rainy and quite uncomfortable. Notwithstanding the 79th Division, made a strong attack north along the western side of the Rhine with the Squadron attacking to the right of the Division.

After hard fighting we occupied Biswaller and Seltz. Soon we were receiving enemy artillery fire from guns supporting the famous Siegfried line. These guns ranged up to 210mm, or eight inch shells.

At this point in Germany, the Squadron was now operating further East than any other Allied Troops of the entire Western front. The only barrier between our men and Germany was the Rhine. How we all wished it was possible to ford this mighty river and engage the Germans on their own soil.

Our objective on December 15, 1944 was the Town of Lauterbourg, on German soil. On December 16, 1944 Lt. Bertoldi of Troop "C" and his Platoon engaged the first Germans on the "Fatherland" and soon elements of the 79th Division, took over our positions and retained control of Lauterbourg. The Squadron was relieved and reverted to Corp Control for a short needed rest.

In the meantime, the Germans were building up their forces on the East Bank and strong enemy patrols constantly probed our positions. A jeep load of Officers and men hit several Teller Mines one evening and two Officers and four Senior Sgts., were killed. All were outstanding Soldiers and this one single incident had the greatest impact on hardened men who felt this loss throughout the remainder of the War and years later.

As Executive Officer it was my duty to write to the families of these men and express our deepest sympathy at the loss of their loved ones. Words were never adequate to truly express our deep sorrow and grief over their loss.

Corp. announced on December 21, 1944, the Squadron was assigned to the 14th Armored Division to form Task Force Hudelson. This news was greeted with less than enthusiasm by members of the Squadron who had liberated a large area of Alsace - Lorraine in the fiercest fighting of the War, many times against strong enemy counter-attacks.

The Squadron had attacked north from Strasbourg to Lauterbourg, inside the German border. Our spirits were of the highest state, having performed at our best level of combat proficiency against a strong determined enemy.
On December 22, 1944, now assigned to Task Force Hudelson, who was the Ass't. Division Commander of the 14th Armor Division, the Squadron took up defensive positions in deep woods of the Upper Vosges Mountains. We thought the last of the Mountains were behind us, but in snow covered ground the men once again dug in positions just south of the fortified town of Bitche, France.

The 94th Cavalry Recon. Squadron of the 14th Armor Division was attached to our Squadron and took up defensive positions to our right.

We set about on defensive installations consisting of mines, booby traps, trip-wired flares and grenades, concertina and apron-style barb wire. The armor cars and tanks were dug into hull defilade, to allow for full turret turning firing.

The weather turned extremely cold and snow fell almost every evening. I had a strong premonition that many hard and difficult times lay ahead. The Germans had successfully attacked the First American Army in the Ardennes with massive forces and the Allied Armies had taken a bad beating and were falling back.

Our third Christmas Day overseas was spent digging in, preparing dugouts and generally improving positions. Notwithstanding an excellent turkey dinner was enjoyed by all and judging from the lack of activity in our sector, the Germans took time off to celebrate also.

Squadron headquarters was in a large Farmhouse on the outskirts of a small village named Mouterhouse. Fighting from defensive positions is most demoralizing for American troops. By nature, they are aggressive and become restless when stationary for too long a period.

It was necessary to daily inspect all defensive positions to insure alertness of the younger officers and N.C.O.'s contact was maintained with elements of the 100th Inf. Div. who were also dug in on our left.

The Germans sent out strong probing patrols every evening which kept our troops on a double alert. There were many small skirmishes and casualties were suffered on both sides.

Col. Hodge was informed on December 29, 1944 by Corp Hd., that a thirty day furlough back to the States had been approved.

Secondary defensive positions were also being prepared under direction of Capt. Zecca, the Ass't S-3. My time was chiefly spent visiting our field of fire were completely interlocking, supplies and ammunition were adequate and high state of alertness was maintained.

As the New Year approached, the enemy activity in the front lines increased. Enemy wheeled and tracked vehicles could be heard throughout the night and everyone sensed that something was soon to happen.

Unit - Troop "C" - Wrecked Church of St. Remy Baccarat, France Nov. 3, 1944
The weather remained bitter cold and the ground was completely covered with snow. Enemy artillery fire increased and there was German Air Activity for the first time.

Just prior to New Year's Eve, VI Corp. advised all troops to remain on sharp alert with no celebrations. Intelligence indicated a possible enemy attack, in early morning.

At midnight, in order to give the enemy an American version of a New Year's party, all assault guns and supporting artillery opened up with a terrific barrage. Little did we know at that moment the Germans were launching a massive attack against the American Seventh Army. The point of their drive was directed against our Squadron positions. Their attack was launched from the Bitche Fortress and New Year's Eve, January 1, 1945, and became one Bitche of an evening, one that will be long remembered by every member of the Squadron, at least those who survived this devastating enemy attack.

The attached lists indicate the casualties the Squadron suffered since landing in Southern France on August 15, 1944. Four officers and thirty-two enlisted men were killed and more than three hundred and fifty officers and enlisted men were wounded. Many returned back to the Squadron after their wounds had healed. Many suffered wounds on three and more occasions.

The strength of the Squadron on January 1, 1945 was forty officers and 730 enlisted men.

Also listed are the vehicles destroyed or captured due to enemy action.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Killed</th>
<th>Wounded</th>
<th>Troop</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Hobby, James L.</td>
<td>Cpl.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Aug 17</td>
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<td>A</td>
<td>Carroll, William A</td>
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<td>Aug 17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Merritt, Charles A</td>
<td>Pvt.</td>
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<td>Aug 20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Vainberg, Bernard</td>
<td>Sgt.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug 23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Broom, Omar F.</td>
<td>Capt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Flourney, Howard S.</td>
<td>Pvt.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 3</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Michal, Robert F.</td>
<td>Pfc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Remi, Leon J.</td>
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<td>Sept 3</td>
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<td>Barby, Lawrence W.</td>
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<td>Stewart, Louis W.</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Lawson, Bennet N.</td>
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<td>Druetteau, Minal A.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 5</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Waddington, William G.</td>
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<td>Oct 12</td>
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<td>Mitteldorf, George E.</td>
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<td>Jacono, Matteo</td>
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<td>Robertson, James H.</td>
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<td>Workman, Jack</td>
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<td>Roddler, Harry G.</td>
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<td>Bowers, Alger L.</td>
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**TOTAL:** 4 32
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<thead>
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<th>Date</th>
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<td>Jeep</td>
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<td>Destroyed by 20mm AT fire</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>Hit by 76mm AT gun</td>
<td>4 M E Pierre</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Tank</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Caught fire / Le Muy</td>
<td>Le Muy</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>A/C</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Knocked out by AT fire</td>
<td>Cleon D'Andron</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Jeeps</td>
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<td>Destroyed and abandoned to prevent capture</td>
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<td>24</td>
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<td>Hit &amp; burned by 75mm AT</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Jeeps</td>
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<td>Engaged by Mk V Tt</td>
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<td>Overturned and badly damaged</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>Jeeps</td>
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<td>Captured in fire fight</td>
<td>Chalavoy</td>
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<td>Jeep</td>
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<td>Destroyed by Mk IV Tt &amp; 20MM AT</td>
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