

**117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mecz) in World War II**  
**January 6, 1941 - May 18, 1945 & Occupation**

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From (US Army Official) Squadron Daily Report data from 01 June 1944 in Italy through 18 May 1945, Germany; COL (Ret) Harold J. Samsel's Book "*Operational History of the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mecz) World War II*"; "*Riviera to the Rhine*" by Jeffrey J. Clarke and Robert Ross and from personal accounts so indicated and "your faithful transcriber", Robert C. Lutz, recon troop NCO of the wartime 102<sup>nd</sup> and 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Squadrons. Recent editing (21 August 2007) by Philip S. Notestine, Editor, *The Spur* newsletter of the 117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Association.

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From August 9, 1921 through November 16, 1940, the 102nd Cavalry had been a unit of the 21st Cavalry Division. In November of 1940, after two years of experimenting in a search for a highly mobile ground reconnaissance force, the War Department selected seven National Guard and two Regular Army Cavalry Regiments to be reorganized as "Horse-Mechanized Cavalry". With a new National Emergency in sight, and mobilization already under way, the "Essex Troop" was honored to be one of those selected. So it was that on the 16th of November 1940, the 102nd was reorganized as the 102nd Cavalry Horse/Mechanized and relieved from assignment to the 21st Cavalry Division. It was from the 102nd Cavalry Regiment that the 117th would later be created.

On January 6, 1941 The 102nd Cavalry Regiment, New Jersey National Guard was ordered into Federal Service for what was to be one year. On that day, all troops reported to their respective Armories to prepare for shipment to Fort Jackson, S.C. for one year of training.

On the 10th of January, Col. Harold Samsel, (then a 2nd Lt.), was detailed to command the advanced party of 60 men. Their job was to draw the supplies and equipment necessary to set up camp for the main body of the Regiment, which would follow about a week later.

The reorganization had created a Rifle Squadron (Horse), a Reconnaissance Squadron (Mechanized), a Headquarters Troop and a Service Troop. The latter was equipped with trailers, (Portee Equipment), to transport the horse squadron to points of deployment. Each trailer was capable of transporting a squad of eight men, their mounts, all of their equipment, weaponry and short- term essential supplies.

In the course of the reorganization, the Troop Designations, with the exception of "B" Troop were changed as follows:

- Old "A" Troop became "F" Troop - Mecz
- " "B" Troop stayed "B" Troop - Horse
- " "C" Troop became "D" Troop - Mecz
- " "D" Troop became "E" Troop - Mecz
- " "E" Troop became "A" Troop - Horse
- " "F" Troop became "C" Troop - Horse

From a peacetime strength of 500 men, the organization had jumped to a mobilization table of some 1500 and recruiting began immediately.

Outfitting of the Regiment was a first priority. Additional horses required to bring the 1st Squadron to full compliment of more than 500 were shipped to Fort Jackson from the Remount Depot in Front Royal, Virginia. Concurrently, the Mechanized Troops began to receive their quota of Scout Cars, Motorcycles, Reconnaissance Cars and Trucks.

Considerable modernization of equipment and weaponry plus extensive training in Cavalry tactics for modern warfare would change the character of the then Horse-Mechanized unit to readiness for commitment to the war zone within roughly twenty months.

The training ranged from basic to advanced in all facets of mounted and dismounted cavalry action. It concentrated on development of skills with all of the weaponry then extant for a Horse Mechanized Regiment as well as care and maintenance of the vehicles and equipment that were new to the organization. The success of the training and of Regimental proficiency was put to the test from September through early December 1941 in the largest peacetime Military Maneuvers yet to be staged in this country. The troops came through with flying colors.

It was the 102nd that would later spawn the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mecz), which was to play a very significant role in five Campaigns of World War II in Africa, Italy, France, Germany and Austria.

The first week of December 1941 was a fateful one. Maneuvers were over. The Regiment would be completing it's year of Federal Service on January 5th. December 7th fixed that!! Training was accelerated, new equipment was issued, leaves were cancelled, troops were brought up to 100% combat strength and all preparations were intensified.

In mid January, the Regiment received orders to prepare for embarkation for overseas duty. It was to board the French Luxury Liner "Normandy" on February 26th. It had been tied up in N.Y. since 1939 when war broke out in Europe.

On the morning of February 18th, the "Normandy" burned and sank at her pier in New York. Sabotage was suspected.

Meanwhile, the extensive and dramatic employment of mechanized units by the Germans in the war in Europe and our own experience during maneuvers had clearly indicated the diminished effectiveness of horse cavalry in the new mode of warfare. So it was that on April 6, 1942; just 15 months to the day following its entry into Federal Service, that the 102nd Cavalry Regiment lost its horses and was reorganized into a fully mechanized Regiment.

The Regiment returned to it's concentrated training regimen until early July when it again received orders to prepare for staging to Fort Dix in early September from whence it was to ship out for overseas duty.

September 25th 1942 the Troops boarded the H.M.S. Dempo, A Dutch passenger liner under British Army control, and sailed October 1st for England in a 96 ship convoy, plus escort, which left the Dempo behind when it developed engine problems two hours out to sea. Repaired by it's Dutch Engineers within a few hours, the ship resumed the trip on it's own. It landed in Liverpool on October 7th after an essentially uneventful crossing.

Most of the Regiment was billeted in Fairford, a beautiful little village in the Cotswold area of England. Our quarters were on the 1000 acre Palmer Estate nearly adjacent to the Village Square. The officers were housed in the Manor House, the enlisted men in Quonset Huts.

Training schedules were quickly implemented to maintain the high state of proficiency attained in the States.

The Tank/Artillery Troop drew it's first Tanks; M5A1s weighing 25 tons and armed with a 37mm gun and two .30 caliber machine guns. Few of the Troopers had ever seen a tank. Fewer still ever sat in one. The artillery platoon of the Tank Troop was equipped with four 75mm French Howitzers mounted on half-tracks. They were capable of only a sixty-degree traverse.

The training then initiated for Officers at the Royal Armored Tactical School was all based upon actual combat experience gained in combat with the Africa Corp. The School was at Brasenow College, Oxford University. The Instructors were all combat experienced Officers of the British Eighth Army.

In December 1942, The 2nd Squadron of the 102nd under the Command of Lt Col. Hodge was detached from the Regiment and assigned to the Security Command of A.F.H.Q. (Allied Force Headquarters)

Now stationed at Shrivingham Barracks, the Squadron commenced to draw its vehicles, weapons and other equipment. Scout Cars, Halftracks, Bantams, Radio equipment etc. were drawn throughout November and December and delivered to Glasgow for loading aboard ship.

The Squadron, by then alerted to sail from Glasgow, Scotland on December 24th, for a destination only later learned to be Algiers, did so aboard the H.M.S. Straithaird and landed at Algiers on the morning of January 3rd 1943. A little less than two months after the first Allied Forces had come ashore on November 8th, 1942.

After several days in the El Biar section of Algiers where we viewed the nightly bombing of the city by the Luftwaffe, the Squadron was billeted, on January 10th, in the small town of Douera, about 18 miles south of Algiers.

A.F.H.Q. was located in the St. George Hotel in Algiers.

On arrival in Africa, the Squadron was composed of two Reconnaissance Troops (A & B), The Light Tank/Artillery Support Troop (F), Squadron Headquarters and the Medical Detachment. It's assigned mission was "Primary Combat Security Force" for Allied Force Headquarters". That entailed:

24 hour Patrols, seven days a week, of a full reconnaissance platoon for a radius of 120 miles around the city of Algiers.

Investigation of suspicious persons and or situations, checks for blackout violations, monitoring and reporting on radios suspected of transmitting information to the enemy and being alert for enemy parachutists or surprise moves by enemy agents.

In addition, one Reconnaissance Troop was to be on full alert every twenty-four hours.

"F" Troop was assigned to patrol the two nearby airports, Blida and Maison Blanche

A reinforced platoon commanded by Lt. Padraig O'Dea was also assigned Special Security and Escort Duty for the Advanced A.F.H.Q. CP in Constantine. Most of the Platoon was involved with escorting Gen. Eisenhower when he went to the forward areas. While there, "Ike" traveled in a Scout Car driven by Sgt. Bill Bennert, (Service Troop), his assigned driver while in combat areas. That Special Security Platoon also provided escort for King George V, Winston Churchill, President Roosevelt, Chief of Staff General Marshall and many other dignitaries when they arrived at Maison Blanche Airport in the course of their visits to AFHQ.

That Escort Service was also provided to U.S. Generals Bradley, Patton and Truscott as well as British Generals Alexander and Anderson throughout their travels in the combat zone.

On January 17th, the Squadron received it's first alert of enemy parachutists landing, in force, near Palestro, 25 miles southeast of Algiers. It responded, in force, and soon came into contact with the Germans. Three were captured by daylight, and two were killed. The balance simply disappeared into the foothills of the Atlas Mountains. It was the first real test of the Squadron's battle proficiency and every phase was executed with exceptional determination and purpose.

The Operations Center constantly received reports of enemy parachute landings, which kept patrols busy tracking down every report. Most of these enemy troops were rounded up, but it is certain that some escaped and holed up in the area.

The Squadron also established schools to train units of the French Army in North Africa. Courses included training in Communications, Weapons, Tactical Employment and Maintenance.

November 30, 1943 the Squadron was reorganized and designated the 117th Cavalry Squadron Reconnaissance (Mecz). The new structure included three Reconnaissance Troops (A, B & C), two Support Troops (E & F), Headquarters and the Medical Detachment. The nucleus of "C" Troop was formed from members of "A" & "B" Troops.

December 30, 1943 the Squadron received orders requiring a forced march of 1000 miles to Marrekech, French Morocco to provide security for Winston Churchill who was to confer there with General DeGaulle.

The Organization less the Tank Company left Douera at 1930 hours on December 30th. The advance party arrived in Marrekech after forty hours of continuous driving. Within 51 hours of departure, the entire convoy arrived in tact; a significant accomplishment that foretold the potential of the unit to sustain operating capacity in combat not-with-standing intensive demands.

Like other security details, the mission involved outposts in strategic areas of the city, mobile patrols, very tight security on site and provision of a mobile reserve for emergencies. The mission was completed without incident.

On it's return from Morocco, the Squadron was attached to the 85th Infantry Division and on February 6th arrived at Foret De La Malta, east of Oran, for Invasion Training. Waterproofing of vehicles, amphibious operations, range firing of all weapons and combat exercises involving a mock-up village were all a part of the final preparation for combat which was to follow shortly.

In late April 1944, the 117th was attached to General Mark Clark's 5th Army and ordered to embark for Naples.

#### MAY 1944

It took two days to load all vehicles, tanks and artillery on two Liberty Ships, the S.S. Grenville-Dodge and the S.S. Horace Moody. Meanwhile, the personnel boarded the Troop Ship H.M.S. Strath-Naver and on May 10th, we joined a convoy of about ninety ships for the 1174 nautical mile trip to Italy.

Four JU88s attacked the convoy the second day out but the dive- bombing missed and three of the planes were shot down.

The convoy entered Naples Harbor and tied up to unload at 1400 hours on May 16th 1944.

At this point in time, the American troops were bogged down at the Rapido River. The invasion force on the Anzio Beachhead was locked in and, the Monastery at Cassino was stubbornly defended by the Germans, who held very commanding positions in the mountains.

It was not until the Allies decided to blast the Monastery that the offensive would again begin to move. The Air Force took care of that. It reduced the Monastery to rubble.

*It was at this point that the 117th Cavalry Squadron was committed to action.*

(The period from 05/22/44 through 05/31/44 chronicled below is taken from Harold Samsel's Book. We have no copies of Squadron Daily reports from the archives for the ten- day period from May 22<sup>nd</sup> through May 31st. - Pg 4A is a Map of Italy. Some key locations of the Campaign are circled.)

Moving into the line on May 22, the Squadron was assigned to relieve the 36th Division Recon. Squadron and set up a beach defense from the mouth of the Garigliano River to a point 12 miles to the south.

Two days later, attached to the IVth Corps, the 117th was moved into the area at Itri and Sperlonga about 100 miles south of Rome. It's new mission was to secure crossings of the Ameseno River and maintain contact with enemy forces. The major objective of the forces involved in this attack was the long-awaited linkup with the forces pushing out of the Anzio Beachhead.

The first enemy prisoner was captured early in the day, a Panzer Grenadier, the first of more than 10,000 prisoners the Squadron would capture in the next ten months.

On the 25th, the Squadron with the 2nd platoon of "A" Troop in the lead took Terracina, a heavily damaged town on the west coast of Italy and advanced aggressively to the north. It hit strong enemy resistance at the mountain town of Sezze. After two days of hard combat and casualties, including the first two killed in action, the town was overrun by our tanks.

(The next two paragraphs are personal comments about May 25th by "A" Troop's Captain Piddington)

"Prior to crossing the IP at 0300 hours, the troops were fed, eggs any way you like them, (If you can believe that), and I gathered my officers under a tree, away from the troops to talk over the forthcoming mission and relax a bit before we kicked off. In the still dark early hours, "A" Troop, with it's 2nd Platoon in the lead took Terracina and advanced aggressively north against sporadic small arms fire. Just south of the mountainous village of Sezza, near the Pontine Marshes, the 3rd Platoon was bogged at a bridge over a dry creek; a bridge they believed to be mined. I took a patrol forward to determine what was holding things up and to get them moving. While walking point with Maj. Bob McGarry we were hit with a heavy concentration of machine gun fire from the ridge beyond. Both McGarry and I were hit. We managed to work our way to cover from where we were able to bring assault gun fire to bear on the ridge. In addition, we called up a Platoon of "F" Company tanks which then overran the enemy positions." (It is of interest that while this was going on, General Keyes had visited the "A" Troop CP and inquired as to the whereabouts of the Troop Commander. Sgt. Bryant Casterline answered that he was up front with the lead Platoon to which the General replied "Good" and left.)

Col. Hodge relieved Captain Piddington because of his wounds and replaced him with Captain Mario Zecca. Piddington was then driven to the Squadron First Aid Station in his Command Jeep by his radio operator, T/4 Bill Coddington. On the way, the jeep capsized and rolled over twice killing Coddington instantly. The Captain received lacerations to his head and face and numerous other bruises to his already wounded body. (Relative to the above mission, the Squadron Daily Report for the day indicates that two were killed in the above action. Captain Piddington says it was instead two wounded as just related. He also adds for the record that: " Major Robert F. McGarry was one of the most courageous, outstanding officers he has known in and outside of the U.S. Army".)

(We return again to events as related in Col. Samsel's Book)

In the meantime, Lt. Pdraig O'Dea led his "B" Troop Platoon through the flooded Pontine Marshes to the Anzio Beachhead where he presented a letter from the Lt. Gen. Geoffrey Keyes, CO of the 2nd Corps to Lt. General Lucian K. Truscott CO of the 6th Corp whose forces had been besieged there since January 22nd.

The Recon Troops continued to probe enemy lines and skirmishes occurred more frequently. On May 28th, "A" Troop ran into very heavy resistance and was forced to relinquish some earlier gains. Meanwhile "B" Troop cleared the two small towns of Sermoneta and Bassiano while "C" Troop, attached to the 36th Division occupied Norma.

Forward patrolling and lateral contact with American Divisions and units of the RBC (Royal British Corps) occupied the final days of May for the entire Squadron.

The final drive on Rome took place in the early days of June. The Herman Goering Division was the primary opposing force.

## JUNE 1944

(The following actions beginning on 06/01/44 are as recorded in official Squadron Daily Reports)

On June 1, 1944, "A" Troop with a platoon of assault guns and a platoon of light tanks attached was in reserve. "B" Troop continued to outpost Sermoneta and operates patrols on the high ground to the north. Contact was maintained on the left with elements of the 91st Recon. Squadron of IV Corps. No contact was reported. "C" Troop whose positions were unchanged from the day before assembled at the CP at 1300 hours to await assignment to move out on a new mission. "E" Troop and "F" Company were in Reserve. No casualties were reported this date.

Later that day, the 117th was reassigned from the IVth Corps to the IInd Corps and attached to the SSF (Special Service Forces). Our new mission working with SSF and the 752nd TD Battalion was to proceed to Highway #6 and try to cut off German forces still fighting delaying actions in the mountains. Our objective was the town of Collaferro.

At 0330 hours on June 2nd, "A" Troop moved out and pushed toward Artena, They made no contact with the enemy but encountered light artillery and mortar fire as they proceeded along Highway #6. They withdrew, set up observation posts and awaited further orders. Tech 5 Edward L. Curry and Pvt. Emery O. Nelson were slightly wounded due to accidental firing of weapons. "B" Troop moved out at 0430 hours and continued on to Collaferro. They ran into heavy Artillery Fire at 1530 hours, lost one bantam and incurred several casualties. At 2115 hours they were ordered to retire and "E" Troop was given a fire mission after which the town was occupied and one prisoner taken. Cpl. Joseph Finlay, PFC Opatz and Pvt. Dominguez had been wounded and PFC Craig was reported missing.

On June 2nd, "C" Troop was assigned as security for the 5th Army Command Post.

June 3rd, at 1000 hours, Troops "A" & "B" received missions to screen the 2nd Corps right flank and rear. "Two platoons of "A" Troop experienced intermittent heavy artillery fire while operating to the north and northeast making contact with elements of the French 2nd Infantry Division. Finally, at 2130 hours "A" Troop was ordered to outpost a line along Highway #6 from Collaferro eastward. "Two platoons of "B" Troop operating from Collaferro and Valmontone to the north, northeast and northwest made contact with the French 3rd Infantry Division. The platoon advancing to the northwest contacted elements of the American 3rd Division. Both platoons were subjected to enemy artillery fire on several occasions and enemy aircraft strafed the road between Collaferro and Valmontone intermittently during the night. The Squadron CP was also subjected to small intermittent air raids throughout the night. "A" Troop took two Prisoners. Pvt. Devlin of "B" Troop was accidentally wounded by the firing of a Thompson SMG. Troop "C", assigned to HQ, 5th Army, was in the vicinity of Sermonetta.

June 4th, Troops "A" and "B" spent the day out-posting and patrolling Highway #6 between Collaferro and Valmontone. No enemy contact was reported although "A" Troop underwent a bomb attack at 0200 hours.

"C" Troop was now operating security outposts and patrols for 5th Army HQ Command Post. Captain Nugent, Lieutenants Carlile and Henry went on detached service as escorts for General Mark Clark. Elements of "E" Troop and "F" Company not attached to any of the Reconnaissance Troops remained in reserve. The Sqdn. CP moved at 2145 hours.

At 2315 hours, while proceeding north, the column was strafed by enemy planes. There were no casualties and no prisoners were taken that day.

The Squadron was approaching the outskirts of Rome. The last town before the Eternal City was Valmontone where the battle had lasted three days before we entered what was left of that town of 10,000 inhabitants.

At this point, the 117th was maintaining contact with the American 3rd Division and the French 2nd Division, all with orders to fight our way into Rome at all costs. Late in the afternoon of June 4th, patrols of the 3rd Division reached the outskirts of Rome. On the morning of June 5th, all elements of the Squadron advanced northeast and had entered Rome by 1700 hours.

June 5, 1944 at 0330 hours, "A" Troop arrived in the assembly area of Salone Vecchio after being strafed by enemy planes. At 0800 hours, the CP was subjected to an artillery barrage in which one man was killed and one wounded. At 1100 hours, "A" Troop was ordered to move toward Rome in support of "B" Troop, which had moved through the city and was operating northeast of the Rome where they were in contact with the enemy and the 3rd platoon had captured 14 prisoners. Cpl. Kuntz of "B" Troop was wounded in action at 2010 hours and Pvt. Allard of "C" Troop was slightly wounded in a Motorcycle accident.

Other casualties for the day were Tec 5 Thomas G. Hennessy of "A" Troop killed by artillery fire and Tec 4 Jurgens also of "A" Troop wounded by artillery.

The Squadron CP moved into the city at 1900 hours and set up an operations office in an apartment house.

The civilian population turned out in force to greet their liberators with great emotion and enthusiasm. The highways leading into their city were littered with wrecked German Tiger tanks and motor vehicles of every type, but with the exception of a few buildings on the outskirts, Rome had been spared the ravages of war.

That same day while, "A" & "B" Troops were operating north of Rome, "C" Troop was detailed to escort General Mark Clark into Rome and provide security for 5th Army HQ.

In Twelve days, the Squadron had advanced nearly 100 miles against strong enemy resistance. There was cause for pride in the performance of all elements. The fighting had, however, taken it's toll. There were more than 100 casualties including 10 KIA. No one had been captured, and we had taken more than 200 prisoners.

On June 6th, north of Rome, "B" Troop with "A" Troop in close support continued north in advance of the 85th Division. Subjected to enemy artillery fire most of the afternoon, they directed return fire destroying two enemy gasoline dumps, and two tanks. "A" Troop took five prisoners and "B" Troop took fifteen. They consolidated their positions at 2200 hours and prepared to move out the next morning. At noon, the Squadron CP moved out of Rome en route to Highway #2. The rear echelon experienced an air raid during the night but incurred no casualties

June 7th our forces continued their steady advance though impeded by several mine fields. The next objective being the town of Monterosi. "A" Troop advanced on the left boundary of II Corps in the 85th Division Sector. They called for artillery fire on an AT gun but it was moved before the fire could be brought to bear. The 1st and 3rd Platoons of "B" Troop moved up on Monterosi.

The 1st Platoon entered the town from the south on the main highway where one bantam hit a mine killing one man and wounding two others. The 3rd Platoon took six prisoners and was relieved at 1600 by the second platoon who took two more.

The casualties for the day were "B" Troopers PFC Chance KIA and Pvts. Icke and Sager lightly wounded.

On June 8th, "A" and "B" Troops continued reconnaissance in advance of the "Howze Task Force", A combat team of Infantry, Medium Tanks, Tank Destroyers and Engineers." A" Troop on the left flank ran into two fire fights and took seven prisoners. A third engagement produced six more prisoners but strong resistance prevented the patrols further advances to the north. Meanwhile, on the right flank of the Squadron sector, "B" Troop lost an armored car and a bantam to mines and the 2nd platoon was subjected to heavy artillery fire at the scene of those losses.

The day's casualties, all in "B" Troop, included Cpl. Freeman KIA, S/Sgt Corey, Tec 4 Etlinger and Tec 5 Gruskowsky lightly wounded in action; and Tec 5 Renzi, Tec 5 Stewart and Pvt. Ehrlich slightly injured in action.

June 9th, "A" and "B" Troops continued the advance on the left flank of the Squadron sector. Elements of "A" Troop reached Viterbo by 1130 hours without meeting any enemy resistance. One platoon entered Vitorchiano but was driven out by a determined counter attack. Reinforced with light tanks, they re-entered the town and drove the enemy out. Meanwhile forward elements of "B" Troop reached the vicinity of Vallerano but their progress was slowed by British troops in the area who had been granted priority on the roads.

The Squadron Command Post had moved up to Ronciglione where, the headquarters of the German High Command had been located. Several days before, their HQ building had been hit during an allied air raid killing all who were there including several high ranking officers. Our tanks had spearheaded the attack on Ronciglione which we had entered to the cheers and greetings of the inhabitants who had taken numerous prisoners and whose bayonets had inflicted their own form of final retribution. There were no casualties in today's actions.

On June 10th, the Squadron CP moved up to Viterbo. On orders from II Corps, "A" & "B" Troops were assembled and the Squadron moved to Tarquinia assigned to the 36th Division. We prepared to reconnoiter for the advance on Grosseto.

On June 11th with "A" Troop in reserve, "B" Troop with a platoon of light tanks and a platoon of assault guns moved out at 0730 hours. The third platoon engaged in a fire- fight with some German Horse Cavalry at 2245 hours and took some prisoners with their mounts. The prisoners were sent back and the horses held in a corral until they could later be turned over to the Division CO for his Pack unit. "B" Troopers, Capt. Shenk, S/Sgt. Burkart, Cpl. Youngblood, Tec 5 Harmon and Tec5 Leavitt returned to the Squadron from various hospitals in Africa. There were no casualties incurred today.

On the morning of 12th, the 1st Platoon of "A" Troop reinforced with three TD's and three medium tanks advanced along Highway #1 toward Bocca D'Albogna where they found six abandoned German 88mm S.P. guns. One had been destroyed, but the other five appeared to be in working condition. A fire- fight ensued and eight prisoners were taken. Meanwhile the balance of the troop, with a platoon of light tanks and a platoon of assault guns advanced northwest about eight km east of Highway #1 toward Grosseto. "B" Troop advanced north from Highway#1 toward Manciano.

Leading elements entered the town at 1010 hours meeting light and scattered resistance throughout the area.



Several fire fights occurred during the day in which a total of fifty-three enemy prisoners were taken. One bantam was destroyed by anti-tank fire. There were three serious casualties. "B" Troop then advanced northwest toward Grosseto on the right of "A" Troop trying to contact the 91st Recon, which was reported to be in the vicinity.

"B" Troop casualties today included Sgt Willis Losey and Pvt Henry Young seriously wounded by shrapnel and Tec5 Orville T. Sensibaugh who received machine pistol wounds in the left leg and both arms.

Tec4 Joseph Santoro of "E" Troop was also injured. A total of 93 prisoners were taken during the day.

On the 13th, "A" Troop continued its advance northwest on Highway #1 toward Magliano supported by medium tanks, TD's and infantry. Strong enemy resistance was encountered and a fire-fight ensued at 1920 hours. "B" Troop continued to advance west from Manciano toward Magliano and Scansano. They encountered 200 enemy Cavalrymen with horses in a stream bed. Artillery fire was requested, but commenced too late to do much damage. One enemy armored car was destroyed at 1830 hours. A detail of men from Headquarters Troop buried two Germans that were found when the Sqdn forward CP moved into a bivouac area north of Orbetello.

June 14th, Troop "A" continuing patrols along Highway 1 were unable to advance against determined enemy opposition. Elements of Troop "A" operating in this area were pinned down by continuous artillery and mortar fire. Other patrols of the Troop operating in the vicinity of Magliano also met strong enemy resistance. "B" Troop continued to advance northwest from Scansano. One patrol encountered an enemy force of four enemy Mark IV tanks and several prime movers loaded with enemy infantry. A fired fight ensued in which one Mark IV was destroyed and one Mark IV and several prime movers damaged. The enemy suffered heavy personnel losses while our forces suffered no casualties and only one vehicle was slightly damaged. Tec5 John T. Kopinsky of "B" Troop was the only casualty the Sqdn. during the day. A total of thirty-nine prisoners were taken in the course of today's action.

On the 15th, patrols of "A" Troop continued their advance north and northwest toward Grosseto received enemy machine gun and mortar fire on the way. Intermittent artillery fire was encountered as they approached the outskirts of Grosseto. One patrol entered the town at 2015 hours and found no enemy. "B" Troop, advancing northwest from Scansano encountered heavy enemy machine gun, mortar and artillery fire which held up the advance. Our assault guns concentrated their fire on the enemy positions, probably destroying one enemy machine gun, but due to the heavy concentration of enemy fire, our patrols were unable to advance until dark. A total of fifty-one prisoners were taken during the day's action. Cpl Pasquale A. Goldonato of "E" Troop received multiple lacerations and abrasions of his right arm.

The next day, June 16th, Troop "A" was still operating patrols north and northwest from Grosseto while "B" Troop was ordered to the vicinity of Pancole. Demolished bridges and road craters limited the progress of "A" Troop's patrols. The enemy was still shelling the roads leading to Grosseto. At 2100 hours, "A" Troop was ordered to assemble and prepare to move to a new area. There were no casualties suffered in today's actions.

June 17<sup>th</sup> "A" Troop prepared for a new mission, which was to start at 0400 hours. Captain Shenk resumed command of "B" Troop which was assigned to HQ 5th Army, relieving "C" Troop which was reported en route to rejoin the Squadron. No casualties were reported and no prisoners were taken today.

June 18th, Troop "A" started its new mission at 0500 hours. Two platoons reinforced with a platoon of light tanks and a platoon of assault guns reconnoitered ahead of the 143rd and 361st Infantry Regiments. The initial advance was limited due to enemy mines on the roads and the slippery condition of the bypasses. Heavy enemy artillery and mortar fire pinned down our patrols. Troop "C" arrived and assembled in the vicinity of Squadron HQ. Sgt Domando and Tec5 Cohen of "A" Troop were battle casualties today and two enemy prisoners were taken.

June 19th 1944 - Troop "A" continued reconnaissance in advance of the 361st and 143rd Infantry Regiments. The roads continued to be heavily mined. Patrols entering Montorsavo encountered heavy artillery fire and with assistance from elements of the 517th Parachute Regiment reduced enemy opposition and occupied the town.

Patrols working north on Highway 1 became involved in a fire- fight. Ten enemy were known to be killed, one enemy machine gun and one anti-tank gun were destroyed. One of our armored cars and one bantam hit mines. Eight prisoners were taken. 117th casualties included one enlisted man, Pvt Taylor, KIA and three enlisted men wounded.

The 20th of June, Troop "A" contacted elements of TFR operating in the vicinity. A patrol working northeast removed enemy mines and was subjected to heavy artillery fire along the route. One light tank hit a mine and heavy artillery and mortar fire registered on the patrol. Troop "C" in their first action on this front received heavy artillery fire and determined resistance, which slowed their advance. Patrols contacted elements of the 517th Parachute Regiment at 2100 hrs.

Casualties were quite heavy today. Six of our men were wounded in action. Nine infantrymen attached to the troop were wounded by artillery fire and five "E" Troopers, attached to "C" Troop, were injured when their half- track hit a large shell crater in the road. Two prisoners were taken.

(The next three paragraphs are comments from Harold Samsel's Book)

By the 20th of June, the Squadron, continuing the attack along the coastal highway had advanced over 210 miles in 37 days of continuous engagement. To date, that was the greatest advance of the American Army in WW II.

A captured German document stated that "The 117th Cavalry Squadron was the equivalent of two German Panzer Divisions". While that may have been an excuse to their high command for their inability to halt recent advances, we had, indeed, been an effective force.

We had captured more than 800 prisoners and inflicted untold numbers of casualties on the stubbornly resisting enemy. Our casualties at that point were 14 dead and 106 wounded.

(The following are again based upon the Squadron Daily Reports)

The next day, June 21st, "A" Troop and two platoons of light tanks and assault guns were held in reserve while patrols from "C" Troop advanced northwest and west from Monte Pascali. They encountered enemy anti-tank fire and destroyed the 75mm anti-tank gun. One of our assault guns was destroyed in this vicinity. Several small groups of enemy infantry were encountered in this area. Another patrol advancing west along Highway 1 from Monte Pascali came under heavy artillery fire along the road. Thirteen prisoners were taken in the day's action. Pvt Fritz of "E" Troop was seriously wounded and Pvt Dole also an "E" trooper was lightly wounded by enemy artillery fire.

June 22nd, "A" Troop was still in reserve along with the 3rd platoon of "C" Troop. "C" Troop's 1st Platoon moved out at dawn to the north and west along Highway 1 but were held up by artillery fire and demolished bridges. The 2nd Platoon moved north and west but was halted by artillery fire and Tiger tanks ahead of them. Attempts to move forward were stopped by artillery and small arms fire. At 2100 hours, both platoons withdrew and consolidated their positions. There were no casualties in today's action and two prisoners were taken.

June 23rd, "A" Troop back on the line advanced west of Highway 1 toward Fallonica where they encountered small arms, machine gun and artillery fire on the eastern outskirts of town. They engaged in fire- fights in this vicinity. Elements of the 517th Parachute Regiment were supporting our patrols in the area.

Troop "C" patrols advanced on Fallonica from the east and south. Friendly artillery fire fell on our advanced elements about two kilometers south of the town. Advancing northward, the 3rd platoon ran into anti-tank and small arms fire. One armored car, hit by an anti-tank gun, was completely destroyed by fire.

The 1st Platoon made a reconnaissance from Route 1 to the high ground paralleling the highway. They moved through small trails in the area until they reached the southern outskirts of Fallonica where they engaged in a small arms firefight. When they entered the town, they found it unoccupied and were ordered to assist the 3rd platoon who were engaged with the enemy at the northern edge of town. We lost one enlisted man and one officer and two enlisted men were wounded in these actions. S/Sgt Kostbar KIA and one officer and two enlisted men wounded. Three prisoners were taken.

On June 24th, the 2nd and 3rd Platoons of "A" Troop advanced northwest on Highway 1 from Fallonica towards Suvereto in front of the 142nd Infantry and the 517th Parachute Regiments. The 1st Platoon was held in reserve. Patrols met small arms, light mortar and anti-tank fire northwest of Fallonica which retarded their movement.

One patrol operating toward Suvereto secured a bridge and waited for the 142nd and the 517th to secure the high ground in the vicinity of the town. "C" Troop was in reserve awaiting a new mission. Today we took nine prisoners and incurred no casualties.

On the 25th of June, the Squadron was relieved from assignment to the 36th Division and after a few hours rest, was assigned to the 34th Division. We are to reconnoiter routes and roads in front of the 133rd Infantry Regiment. One platoon of Troop "A" proceeded northwest toward Suvereto in advance of the 142nd Infantry and the 517th Pcht. Regiment. Heavy artillery fire and the presence of several enemy tanks in the vicinity prevented the platoon from advancing. Troop "C" advanced ahead of the 133rd Infantry northwest of Highway 1, toward Vincenzo, encountering enemy artillery fire. There were no casualties for the day and we took three prisoners.

June 26, 1944, with "A" Troop in reserve, Troop "C" patrols, spearheading the advance of the 133rd Infantry, met determined enemy artillery, mortar and small arms fire in the vicinity of Vincenzo. The intense fire prevented more than a limited advance north along Highway 1 from Vincenzo. "E" Troops five assault guns supported "C" Troop in the vicinity of Vincenzo. There were no casualties in these actions and two prisoners were taken.

Headquarter Troop's 2nd Lt. Carroll was killed by shrapnel near the town of Campiglia-Marittima while on liaison duty with the 133rd Infantry. Tec5 John J. Hill was seriously wounded and PFC Alonzo E. Whitlock was lightly wounded while traveling in the same bantam.

On the 27th, the Germans are putting up stiff resistance employing self-propelled guns as artillery and anti-tank guns, which limits the advance of our patrols. Troop "A" is still in reserve. "C" Troop sent out patrols at dawn. They arrived at Vincenzo but, at this point were held up by enemy artillery and anti-tank fire. They were unable to proceed further. The 2nd Platoon engaged in a fire- fight all morning and finally succeeded in driving the enemy from their positions. They attempted to reconnoiter to the northeast, but found the terrain impassable. The Troop consolidated it's positions to await further orders. Seventeen prisoners were taken and there were no casualties today.

On the 28th, "C" Troop continued to spearhead the advance of the 133rd Regiment but was slowed down by blown bridges. Five "E" Troop assault guns continued to support the "C" Troop patrols and were used on several occasions to fire on targets north and northeast of Vincenzo. At 2100 hours, the 2nd platoon was ordered to guide a supply train of the 442nd Infantry to their battalion in the hills. They searched the entire night for the battalion to no avail.

The 3rd Platoon moved out at dawn, through Vincenzo and north on Route 1 where they ran into enemy artillery, mortar, anti-tank and small arms fire and were pinned down for four hours.

Finally, a tank destroyer battalion moved in and silenced the enemy artillery. We took seventeen prisoners during the days fighting. There were no casualties among Squadron personnel today.

June 29th, Captain Omer Brown arrived at Squadron Headquarters at 0500 hours with a message from Fifth Army Headquarters Dated 28 June 1944. Our Squadron was relieved from attachment to the 133rd Infantry and the 34th Division. Orders stated that we were to proceed to Naples and that we are reassigned to VI Corps, Seventh Army. Captain Brown was sent to Naples to contact the Commanding General, VI corps for instructions. "B" Troop was relieved from attachment to Fifth Army. The day was spent by the troops assembling and preparing for the movement to Naples.

On June 30, 1944 at 0300 hours, the troops left bivouac and started, by convoy, for Naples. All tracked vehicles were to proceed to the port of Civitavecchia, load on LSTs, and proceed to Naples by water. Captain Brauchli was put in charge of this convoy. "B" Troop joined the motor convoy in Tarquinia. The Squadron made bivouac for the night in a grove five miles west of Sermonetta.

#### JULY 1944

On July 1, 1944 the Squadron consisted of three Reconnaissance Troops (A, B, & C), an Assault Troop (E), a Support Troop (Company F), a Medical Detachment and a Headquarters - Headquarter and Service Troops.

The final leg of the road-march was undertaken when the Squadron moved out of bivouac 5 miles west of Sermoneta at 0800 hours and proceeded south. The column moved south until 1330 hours, when it was met by Captain Omer F. Brown who directed it to the bivouac area assigned by G-3, VI Corps. That area is a large Olive Grove 2 miles southwest of the small town of Teono, and approximately 47 miles north of Naples. The Squadron traveled 77 miles today.

The trip just completed covered a distance of 269 miles and was accomplished with only one accident. Cpl. Hegler, Headquarters Troop, was injured and hospitalized when his motorcycle overturned and threw him into a ditch at Grossetto.

The Squadron CP was set in order and operating at 1500 hours.

July 2, 1944 - Today is Sunday. All men were given the opportunity to attend Divine Services. The Catholic men were given the opportunity to go to confession and to attend Mass at 1600 hours. General Services were conducted for men of other faiths at 1800 hours. Both services were conducted in the Headquarters Troop Area.

Motor Maintenance occupied the time of all the men while they were not attending Divine Services.

July 3rd the entire day was spent on motor maintenance. Troop and Squadron Motor Officers supervised the effort and the 87th Ordnance Company inspected the vehicles. Troop "E" & "Company "F" were en route to join the Squadron in this area. The Squadron Special Services Officer arranged for movies in the Squadron area tonight.

Motor Maintenance continued on July 4th. We were still working to bring the vehicles up to pre-campaign standards of efficiency. The tracked vehicles arrived in the area this evening, transported from the vicinity of Rome by LST. Movies were shown in the Headquarters area again this evening.

July 5th the Ordnance personnel completed their inspection of all vehicles and personal and vehicular weapons. Movies were shown again this evening.

Motor maintenance continued on July 6th in preparation for a showdown inspection tomorrow.

After four days of work, all vehicles and arms are beginning to attain the Squadron standards of the past. PX rations were distributed including American beer, candy, Coca Cola and cookies. Movies were shown again tonight.

Captain Levy conducted a Dental Inspection of all personnel today and mapped out a great deal of work for himself.

S/Sgt Ellison, "A" Troop, S/Sgt Bertoldi, "B" Troop and Sgt D'Annunzio of Troop "E" were appointed 2nd Lieutenants effective June 30th in a US Army letter dated June 28, 1944. Lt. Col. Hodge presented the men with their insignia and notice of appointment. 1st Lt Bush was assigned as CO of Company "F" and relieved of assignment as Assistant S-2.

July 7th a showdown inspection of the personnel, vehicular and organizational equipment was begun today by all troops. Equipment lost and damaged while in combat will be replaced. Enlisted men were given their first passes. Ten percent of the Squadron was permitted to go to Naples for an eight-hour pass.

An informal discussion, "Battle Experiences" for Platoon Leaders and Platoon Sergeants was held today.

July 8, 1944 - The showdown inspection was completed today. Ten percent of the Squadron was permitted to go to Naples on pass. Pass trucks made stops at Casserta, and one truck went to Pompeii. Movies were held again this evening.

July 9th - All personnel were given the opportunity to go to Divine Services today. Rest and organized athletics were the order of the day and the usual pass detail went to Naples was authorized.

Nine of the Squadron Officers were given passes to visit Rome for four days. An abandoned villa at Formia has been located and is being converted into a rest camp for enlisted men.

July 10 1944 - Squadron Officers and Enlisted men were paid today. A program of one hour cross-country marches was initiated to be conducted each day. An inter-troop soft ball league was formed and movies were on again tonight. Passes to Naples continued.

July 11, 12 & 13th - Drills and routines followed the usual pattern and on the 12th, an Operations Task Force was set up in the Blockhouse at Naples for the forthcoming "Operation anvil". Lt. Col. Hodge and Captain Omer Brown activated the Headquarters and were joined on the 13th by Captain Wood, Sgt. Repke and Tec4 Lagowski.

On July 14th, the Squadron conducted a Retreat Formation today, the first since it's arrival in Italy. The one-hour march, Pass Detail and Softball activities continued as usual.

July 15th - In preparation for the forthcoming tactical operation, the Assault Troop and Tank Company Platoons were attached to the three Reconnaissance Troops. The 1st Platoons of "E" & "F" were attached to "A" Troop: the 2nd Platoons of "E" & "F" and the HQ Platoon of "E" Troop were attached to "B" Troop and the 3rd Platoons of "E" & "F" were attached to "C" Troop. Routine training continued.

On the 16th of July, Divine services were held and Pass Details went to Naples Casserta and Pompeii. The Rest Camp for Enlisted men was opened at Formia and the first details went there today.

July 17, 1944 "B" Troop with it's attached Assault Gun and Tank Platoons was attached to the 45th Division for the forthcoming operation and moved from it's bivouac near Teano to the 45th Division area.

The forward echelon of Squadron Headquarters moved to Staging Area #4 near Naples. These men will waterproof vehicles and prepare to load them aboard ship for movement to the next theater. Lt Ward is in charge of the Headquarters Troop Detail.

On July 18th, "E" Troop received new guns. The M7 Self-propelled 105mm Howitzers were a much-needed replacement for the M8 75mm Howitzers with which we had been operating throughout the Italian Campaign. Headquarters Troop moved from Teano to the vicinity of Pianura just northwest of Naples.

Captain Brown was recalled from Task Force Operations and placed in command of "E" Troop.

The Squadron received a Letter of commendation from Major General Fred L. Walker, CO of the 36th Infantry Division in recognition for outstanding performance of the Squadron while attached to the 36th Division. (See Attachment "G")

The first decoration to be awarded to the Squadron was received by Cpl. Smutney, Troop "B" for "Galantry in Action". Cpl. Smutney received the Silver Star for voluntarily accepting a difficult mission at Terrecina, Italy and completing the mission in an exemplary manner with complete disregard for his own safety.

July 19, 1944 - Headquarters Troop has now settled down to routine administrative details. Troops "A" & "C" continue preparations for the forthcoming movement and operation. Troop "B", attached to the 45th Division is completing it's preparations under supervision of the Division HQ.

On the 20th of July, The forward echelon loaded their vehicles aboard the "Roger Williams" at Naples. "A" Troop with attached elements of "E" and "F" reported to the 36th Division for training and the up-coming operation.

21st & 22nd of July 1944 - Routine preparations for the operation continued and on the 22nd, "C" Troop with it's attached elements moved to the 3rd division area for training. The "Roger Williams" with the vehicles of the forward echelon aboard moved out into the Bay of Naples to await the formation of the convoy.

July 23rd - Pvt. Taylor, formerly of Troop "A", was awarded the Bronze Star for "Heroism in Action" north of Grosseto, Italy. Pvt. Taylor gave his life in the action for which he was awarded the decoration. This was the first Bronze Star awarded to any member of the Squadron. The VIth Corps patch has been issued to all personnel. The troops are now occupied with training for the forthcoming operation.

24th to the 29th of July 1944 - The Squadron has been decentralized and the Troops now operate under the direction and guidance of the Divisions to which they are attached. The Squadron continues to maintain a Command Staff at Headquarters, VI Corps. This staff consists of: Captain John M. Brown, (replaced Capt. Omer F. Brown); Captain Wood; Captain Piddington; Sgt. Repke and Tec4 Lagowski. At this Headquarters all decisions, plans and future operations are coordinated to assure the maximum efficiency in the forthcoming operation.

(Note: In late July, Captain Piddington returned from the hospital and was assigned to a small group in Sqdn. HQ under Captain J. M. (Newt) Brown to work on the Squadron's role in the Plan for the Southern France Invasion.)

The balance of the Squadron Headquarters and HQ Troop continues to bivouac in the vicinity of Pianura, Italy performing last minute maintenance and supplying needs of the Troops.

In Summary, the beginning of the month of July found the Squadron en route from the front lines to a rest area to the south. Soon after reaching the Naples area, passes were given daily to officers and enlisted men and all personnel were given many opportunities to rest and relax after the strain of the past campaign.

The latter part of the month saw the Squadron in preparation for what is to be a sea movement and undoubtedly an invasion. The close of the month saw the Squadron decentralized and the line Troops under the control of the 3rd, 36th and 45th Divisions. The month has now ended and still the Squadron is in doubt as to the place where it's next engagement is to take place.

#### AUGUST 1944

(We have no record of Squadron Daily reports from 08/01/44 through 08/09/44)

(The following few comments are from Harold Samsel's book about the planned invasion of Southern France)

In general, the plan called for Corps to invade with the 36th Division on the right flank, over the beaches of St. Raphael; the 45th Division to land in the center at St. Maxime and the 3rd Division to land on the left flank, hitting the beaches in the vicinity of St. Tropez. The plan also called for dropping a provisional Airborne Division in the vicinity of Le Muy at 0400 hours of "D" Day. There was to be an early link-up between the beach assault force and the airborne.

The 6th Corps plan differed from the Normandy invasion in that it called for Reconnaissance Units to land with the first Infantry to go ashore and to move out as a screening force for the infantry as soon as possible.

Defense of the area was the responsibility of the German XIXth Army, which was thought to have 12 Divisions including two Panzer. One of those proved to be the 11th. Several of the XIXth's Divisions had been badly mauled in the Normandy area and had been sent south to refit.

(Squadron activity from Daily Reports resumes with August 9, 1944)

On August 9th, Lt. Col. Hodge and CWO Fort boarded the naval Transport Barnett. It was one of two Command Ships for the invasion.

On August 10th, "A" Troop was loaded aboard the USS *Achernar* (AKA 53) at Naples. Now all personnel less the rear echelon have been loaded aboard ships for the movement.

(Note: For some reason, the Daily Reports do not detail the loading of "B" and "C" Troops. B" &"C" Troop Recon. Platoons were loaded on LCTs - Landing Craft Tank.)

August 11th - All troops are aboard ship awaiting formation of the convoy.

August 12th - All troops are aboard ship following the usual shipboard routine of life- boat drill, air raid alerts and orientation lectures.

August 13th - Today marked the formation of the convoy that was to attack southern France. The ships on which "A" Troop was loaded put to sea at 1230 hours. Troop "B's" joined the convoy at 1930 hours. Troop "C's" joined at 2015 hours and the Headquarters Troop ship joined at 1830 hours. Troop "E", Company "F" and Medical Personnel are attached to the Reconnaissance Troops.

August 14th - All Troops were briefed on their respective missions by the officers aboard their ships. French currency was issued and all last minute details cleared up. The particulars of the invasion were announced, D Day is the 15th of August and H Hour is 0800 hours. The convoy moved through the Straits between Corsica and Sardinia. There was no enemy activity, air or sea.

(Note: Twenty-four hours before the invasion, Captain Zecca, CO of "A" Troop became ill with Malaria and was hospitalized.)

Captain Piddington was reassigned to lead his former Troop "A" in the invasion.)

(Note: There is another inconsistency in the Daily Reports - They omit the landing of the "B" And "C" Troop Recon. Platoons on the beaches of Corsica near Ajacio, on the 14th, to pick up supplies. The men had time for a swim before reloading and proceeding, with the main convoy, to the invasion beaches.)

August 15th -The convoy arrived off the coast of southern France at approximately 0400 hours. The naval escort vessels and supporting aircraft opened hostilities at dawn with a tremendously heavy bombardment. The Squadron personnel awaited orders to go ashore. At 0815, word was received that the initial assault was successful and that the first wave was pushing inland against light opposition. (See Map of Landing Beaches Pg 14 A.)

The entire Squadron landed in France on D-Day. Headquarters and Service Troops landed near St. Maxime at 1600 hours. The landing of Headquarters Troop was accomplished from an LCD which approached to within thirty feet of the shore and from there all personnel waded through the five foot deep water to the beach.

Troop "A" and attached elements landed on Green Beach at 1630 hours near Frags (in the vicinity of St. Raphael.) (Correction: Captain Tom Piddington, CO of "A" Troop tells us that landing took place at 1000 hours.)

The Troop then assembled, de-waterproofed and bivouacked in the vicinity of Frags. Captain Piddington also advises that the Train Element of "A" Troop led by Lt Mark Quesenbury landed ahead of schedule before the infantry, in error, and sought cover immediately in the vicinity of Frejus. They were fortunate to incur no casualties.

Troop "B" 3rd Platoon (Typo? Probably 1st Platoon, - see last sentence) landed on Yellow Beach at 0925 and began aggressive reconnaissance toward Le Luc. Troop "B" Train Element landed at Yellow Beach at 1200 hours and proceeded toward the Troop CP at Plan de la Tout. Headquarters Platoon and attached personnel landed at 1630 hours. The 2nd and 3rd Platoons landed at 1330 hours and conducted aggressive reconnaissance toward the Troop Rendezvous at Le Luc.

The 2nd and 3rd Platoons of "C" Troop landed from LCTs at 0945 near Cogolin (vicinity of St. Tropez) and proceeded on aggressive reconnaissance toward Cogolin. The balance of the Troop landed at 1430 and proceeded to Cogolin where the troop assembled.

"E" Troop, Company "F" and Medical personnel landed with the troops to which they were assigned.

Casualties for the day were: Cpl. Hobby KIA, Capt. Shenk SWA, Pvt Deutcher LWA and Cpl Thompson LIA.

August 16th All Troops conducted aggressive reconnaissance northward. Troop "A", working with the 36th division on the right flank of the Seventh army pushed ahead determinedly against stiffening opposition. Pvt. Merritt was KIA in this sector.

Troop "B", operating with the 45th Division, pushed ahead in the central sector of the Seventh Army line.

"C" Troop, operating with the 3rd division on the left flank of the seventh army pushed aggressively northward. Resistance in this sector was exceptionally strong. Tec5 Carroll was LIA in this sector. One armored car and one 1/2 ton truck were lost in this action.



Troop "E", Company "F" and Medical units attached to the Recon Troops continued in support of them. Headquarters Troop remained in bivouac near St. Maxime.

Casualties for the day were: Sgt. Velinsky LWA, Tec5 Donnabedian LWA and Pvt Trosclair LWA. There were none killed, seriously wounded or missing in action.

17, August 1944 - The entire Squadron assembled in the vicinity of Le Muy, France to reorganize preparatory to embarking on another mission. It remained in the area all day performing maintenance on vehicles and weapons and obtaining a bit of rest. It was at Le Muy that "A" Troop made contact with the Paratroops who had landed before dawn on "D" day.

The Squadron was assigned as the Reconnaissance element of a Provisional Armored Group to be commanded by Brigadier General F. B. Butler, and to be known as *Task Force Butler*. The Task Force is comprised of this Squadron, two Battalions of Infantry, one Company of Sherman Tanks, one Battalion of AFA, one Company of TDs plus elements of Combat Engineers, Medical Corps and MPs. (See Map Pg 15A - Area of Operations Aug 15, 1944 - Aug. 30th)

(The book *Riviera to the Rhine* page 144 describes the Task force as composed of " a motorized infantry battalion, approximately thirty medium tanks, twelve tank destroyers, and the twelve self-propelled artillery pieces and the armored cars, light tanks and trucks of the Cavalry Squadron.)

The mission assigned this force, as described in the Squadron Daily Reports, is to move forward aggressively to the area around Sisteron and thence:

(A) To seize and hold high ground north of Grenoble. (B) Push forward and seize the high ground to the West and seize the high ground on the east bank of the Rhone River, or: (C) Move to the west and seize the high ground on the east bank of the Rhone between Montelimar and Livron.

(Col. Samsel, in his book, states the (B) option as: "Seize the high ground immediately south of Lyon astraddle the Rhone River)

The purpose of these three movements is to sever the main lines of communication to the German forces along the Riviera.

The casualties for this day were: Tec5 Carroll and Pvt. Merritt KIA (both reported on the 16th), Sgt. Cucozza LIA and Tec5 Bellou LWA.

August 18th - The Squadron moved out of bivouac at Le Muy at 0500 hours to initiate and spearhead the drive to the north by the Butler Task Force. The Squadron moved out in column with Troop "C" in the lead. When the column reached Draguignan, the Squadron took up a three Troop front and moved aggressively on Riez with "A" Troop on the left flank, "B" Troop in the center and "C" Troop on the right flank.

The Squadron leading the Task force was disposed thusly: "A" Troop on the left flank; "B" Troop in the center; "C" Troop on the right flank. "A" Troop met only slight resistance; "B" Troop met no resistance; "C" Troop met heavy resistance at a point three miles north of Draguignan.

When "C" Troop encountered stiff resistance three miles north of Draguignan an aggressive action and fire fight resulted. Finally, "C" Troop's 3rd Platoon flanked the enemy position and the battle was over. In this action, Troop "C" captured Lt. General Ferdinand Von Neuling, Commanding General of the enemy Corps occupying this area. A short time later the General's entire staff was taken prisoner.

That night, the Squadron bivouacked at Riez. "A" & "B" Troops outposted the high ground ten miles to the north of the Squadron position. Casualties for the day were; PFC Ifill and Pvt Spicer both LWA

(The details of the capture of Lt General Von Neuling and his Staff by the editor of this historical record)

As part of the flanking move by "C" Troop's 3rd Platoon, I, with one section of my Platoon, had reached the grid coordinates which were my objective and was awaiting a new mission while holding a small "T" intersection. While watching for any sign of the enemy, three German officers appeared in the fields, on the high ground, across from the intersection and walked toward our position carrying a white flag. They told me that they represented a General who wished to surrender to the officer in charge - which they would take that officer to him. There was no officer present, but because all was quiet and no action, whatever, had taken place at this location, I agreed to call for an officer to accept a formal surrender. Lt. Joseph Syms responded to the call shortly and with the German escort, the Lt and I with several of my men were led to a cave on the high ground where Lt. Syms accepted the General's pistol and the surrender of Lt. General Ferdinand von Neuling, Commander of the German 62nd Corps and his entire Staff. Along with the prisoners, we also took over the General's copious liquor supply and several staff limousines. (The liquor cache filled the back half of one of the limos.)

We return now to the Squadron Daily Reports

August 19, 1944 -Troop "A" engaged in a fire- fight for the possession of an enemy held bridge near les Mees. With the aid of the attached Tank Platoon from Company "F", the bridge was taken. The Troop then pushed on to Chateau- Arnoux. This position was held by a force of 180 Germans including 3 officers. After a short sharp engagement, the entire Garrison was taken prisoner.

Troop "B" assaulted and took the town of Digne. They engaged in several fire- fights but suffered no casualties. A Brig. Gen. and several hundred troops were captured. "C" Troop is in reserve. "E" and "F" are supporting the Recon. Troops.

"B" Troop engaged approximately 300 lightly armed enemy infantry South of Digne. The enemy was reinforced with anti-tank weapons and "B" Troop was hard pressed until a Platoon of Tank Destroyers was dispatched to their aid at 1200 hours. At 1600 hours, the enemy was sufficiently disorganized so that "B" Troop was able to withdraw and leave the Maquis, who had been working with them to finish the skirmish. The Troop then headed to the Squadron bivouac area at Sisteron. S/Sgt. Fisher was LWA in today's action.

The Squadron has received more and more cooperation from the Maquis who seem to be better organized than was evident during our first contacts.

"Riviera to the Rhine" (pgs 144 -147) paints the Big Picture as follows for the period form August 19th - 22nd.

On the 19th, with the Butler Task Force well on the way north, General Patch instructed General Truscott to direct one Infantry Division to drive north on Grenoble. Truscott instructed General Dahlquist, CO of the 36th Division, to be prepared to have his unit execute that order the next day. He then radioed Butler to hold at Sisteron but continue patrols to the west to determine practicability of seizing the high ground north of Montelimar. Meanwhile, Truscott expected at least one Regiment of the 36th to be at Sisteron on the afternoon of the 20th. Butler, whose radio communications with Corps had become intermittent, never received that message. He was still operating on instructions from the night of the 19th/20th that left his mission unchanged. He warned of shortages of fuel and supplies and the need for instructions relative to directing his main effort north toward Grenoble or west toward Montelimar. His artillery observation planes had reported strong German forces at Grenoble and at Gap and he was uneasy about remaining stationary at Sisteron, deep in enemy territory. He therefore decided to establish a strong outpost at Croix Haute Pass about forty miles north on the main highway to Grenoble and to dispatch a force to Gap. At this point, Butler sent his operations officer to Corps HQ for more guidance.

On the morning of the 20th, having no directions to the contrary, Butler sent reinforced Cavalry Troops to Croix Haute and to Gap. That evening, Butler, when meeting with the Assistant Div. Commander of the 36th, was informed by Gen. Stack that the Division was displacing north to Grenoble. Stack had with him an advanced echelon of HQ and a Regimental Task Force built on two Battalions of the 143rd Infantry. The 3rd Battalion had been assigned to Butler. The balance of the Division was to follow the next morning - the 21st. A shortage of fuel, transport and supplies was delaying the 36th Division's movement.

Meanwhile, unknown to Stack and Dahlquist, Truscott had again met with Patch around noon of the 20th and Patch had agreed with Truscott's plan of action, but the failure of Truscott's instructions to reach Butler, meant that Task Force troops were widely dispersed before the orders were received to seize the high ground north of Montelimar.

It was at this point that Truscott became more certain of German intentions south of the Durance River and of his ability to reinforce Butler if necessary. Now, at 2045 hours on August 20th, he radioed specific instructions to Butler directing him to move to Montelimar at dawn with all possible speed. He was to seize the town and block the German routes of withdrawal. The 36th division would follow the Task force ASAP. Truscott then sent Lt. Col. Conway of his G-3 Section with more specific written instructions, instructing Butler to seize the high ground immediately north of Montelimar before dark that day, but not the city itself. For reinforcement, two battalions of Corps Artillery were on the way but only a single Regimental Combat Team from the 36th would support the effort. The rest of the Division would follow later. The only trouble was that Dahlquist had not been informed of the switch from Grenoble to Montelimar. As for Butler, at daybreak on the 21st, he regrouped the bulk of his force at Apres.

Leaving a small force at the Pass, and larger one at Gap, he moved westward arriving at Crest, on the Drome, about 13 miles from the Rhone, late in the afternoon.

The battle was developing in an area that came to be known as the Montelimar Battle Square. Almost twenty miles north of Montelimar, the town of Crest was at the corner of the square (or rectangle) which was bounded by the Drome River on the north, the Rhone River on the west, and the Rubion River on the south. The sides of the area varied from nine to seventeen miles and encompassed about 250 Square miles on ground that alternated between flat, open farmland to rugged wooded hills, which rose often steeply to more than 1900 feet.

(As pointed out in the above paragraphs, on the 20th, General Butler had decided to send forces to Croix Haute Pass and Gap to deal with strong German forces reported to be in Grenoble and Gap.)

We return now to the events as covered by the Squadron Daily Reports.

August 20, 1944 - The Squadron conducted limited Reconnaissance northeast and northwest of Sisteron while awaiting orders for a new objective.

Troop "A" proceeded eastward to the town of Gap and was to continue north from there but ran into a heavy enemy force in the town. Supported by Troop "E", a Platoon of Tanks from Company "F", and a large number of Maquis who had been recruited en route, the Troop took up positions on the high ground 3 miles to the west of Gap. Captain Omer Brown, commanding "E" Troop, entered the town under a flag of truce to negotiate for the surrender of the town and the Garrison. The Officer commanding the German Troops refused to surrender and gave as his reason that the Maquis would kill his men as they surrendered. Captain Brown told the German that they would have to surrender or the town would be bombed by a force of 60 Flying Fortresses at 1700 hours and that the town would be shelled immediately. The enemy chose to fight.

Captain Brown returned to his Troop and ordered his Assault Guns to open fire on the town. They destroyed the Radio Tower at which point the Town's entire Garrison took off for the hills where they surrendered in large numbers.

(Captain Piddington's account states that the German garrison decided to surrender after the shelling and asked for a guarantee that they not be taken into captivity by the Maquis. He obliged. They offered their surrender in a note that said " Yes". That note, was hand delivered to the Captain by Pierre Verne, one of the town's Gendarmes. The surrender involved some 1500 troops.)

At 2000 hours, Troop "A" received word that a force of 1500 Germans was moving from the northeast toward Gap. Captain Piddington elected to hold the Town. "E" Troop laid it's guns in position to cover all the main routes of approach to the Town. The enemy force bivouacked about 18km from town and both forces waited each other out throughout the night.

Casualties for the day were: Tec5 McKeel, Tec5 Castle and Pvt Benjimen all LIA. Sgt. Velinsky died of wounds received on the 16th of August 1944.

21, August 1944 - Early in the morning, Captain Piddington dispatched a Reconnaissance Platoon to Col Bayard about 8 miles north of Gap. In order to reach Gap, the enemy would have to pass this point and a reception was prepared for them. Patrols were posted on the flanks and "E" Troop moved up a draw to within 2000 yards of Col Bayard. At 1000 hours, Major McNeil arrived with Task Force M consisting of: one Company of TDs; two Platoons of Sherman Tanks plus the four Sherman Tanks that had been attached to "A" Troop. The enemy was reported to be at Ronditte, a town one km to the north. One of the tanks fired four rounds into the town and the Germans retreated without firing a shot.

Approximately 300 of the enemy left the main body of those retreating and took to the woods. They were routed out by the Maquis with the support of four Sherman Tanks. At 1400 hours, "A" & "E" Troops returned with their supporting elements to the Task Force.

At 1400 hours on the 21st, "C" & "B" Troops were ordered to seize and hold the high ground on the east side of the Rhone between Montelimar and Livron. The mission was accomplished by 1900 hours. "C" Troop assisted by a Platoon from "B" Troop sighted and destroyed an enemy convoy which was moving north along the highway on the west bank of the Rhone. The column was destroyed with a loss to the enemy of 40 trucks. There were no casualties on this date.

(Riviera to the Rhine (pg 147) makes the point that on the 21st, General Truscott placed the Butler Task Force under the command of General Dahlquist, CO of the 36th Division.)

August 22, 1944 - "C" Troop with elements of Troop "E" and Company "F" attached and reinforced with a Platoon of Tank Destroyers and a Company of Infantry, Protected the northern flank of the Squadron. Troop "B" , attached to the 2nd Battalion, 141st Infantry, was holding the southwest corner of the Squadron Front. Troop "A" , now badly needed at Montelimar, had been recalled from Gap.

At 1030 hours an enemy column moving north along the Rhone, swung east at Montelimar and tried to penetrate "A" Troop's position but was routed and partially destroyed by Troop "A" which at this time was reinforced with six Sherman tanks and a section of Tank Destroyers. This situation was finally closed late in the afternoon. At 1500 hours, the 3rd Platoon of Troop "A" was surrounded one half mile west of Cleon. The platoon was able to extricate itself, and after disabling its weapons, radios and vehicles, took to the hills on foot. Heavy artillery fire directed by air liaison was responsible for breaking up and routing the column after it had been turned from the Squadron position by fire- fights. At nightfall the Platoon, which had gone into the hills, was still out of contact. There were no casualties on this date.

It was during this period that we first encountered the 11th Panzer Division which was protecting the east flank of the retreating German 19th army as it made its way north in valley along the Rhone River.

*(Riviera to the Rhine* tells of the above German action and adds that the main force of the enemy then regrouped south of the Rubion River, advanced nine miles east and swung north, advancing on Puy St. Martin and Marsanne, behind Butlers defenses.

They took Puy, cutting the American supply line to Crest and Sisteron and endangering Butler's CP which was in Marsanne. By chance, the "A" Troop column returning from Gap ran into this developing situation. The Troop had just turned south from Crest when they came in behind the German column. The Troop Commander, (Captain Piddington), realizing the implications of the German advance, organized a tank infantry attack into Puy. (The infantry were Stack's 36th Division forces, who, as luck would have it, were just returning from Croix Haute Pass.) While Sherman tank fire blocked roads leading from Puy to Marsanne, the unit from Gap cleared Puy that evening destroying ten German vehicles, but suffering no casualties.)

#### Now back to Squadron Daily Reports

August 23, 1944 - Troop "C" with elements of Troop "E" and Company "F" attached and reinforced with a platoon of Tank Destroyers and a Company of Infantry, protected the northern flank. Troop "B", which was attached to the 2nd Battalion, 141st Infantry, was holding the southwest corner of the Squadron front. Troop "A" with a Company of medium tanks and two tank destroyers supported by several hundred Maquis, covered the left or southern flank and the southeastern front. At approximately 0900 hours, a hostile column following the same route as on the day before, penetrated "A" Troop's position but was turned and practically destroyed by 1400 hours. The isolated and lost platoon of the night previous arrived, less its vehicles, in the CP at 1700 hours.

Troop "B" plus about 300 Maquis covered the left flank of the 141st Infantry in a drive on Montelimar. The attack commenced at 1600 hours and met stiff resistance about one km northeast of town. A gap developed in "B" Troop's left flank through which the enemy infiltrated. The terrain was of such nature that mechanization could not cover it properly with the result that the enemy secured positions between "B" Troop and the 141st Infantry. Two Mark VI Tanks and one self-propelled gun penetrated "B" Troop's flank for a distance of three km at approximately 1700 hours. These vehicles were destroyed and their crews captured by 1830 hours. While this was going on, a force of enemy Infantry had started up the river- bed, but were repulsed by a Company of the 141st Infantry. By nightfall, the situation was very tense and the positions of friendly and enemy troops was very difficult to ascertain.

Casualties for the day were: Tec5 Kuberski LWA, Pfc. Ellison, Pfc. Morgan and Pvt. Holloway MIA.

August 24, 1944 - "A" Troop with all attachments was ordered to assemble and move to the vicinity of Apres, reporting on their arrival to the CG 45th division. Troop "B" which was still attached to the 141st Infantry and was continuing the action in the vicinity of Montelimar was ordered to move up and take the area previously occupied by "A" Troop. "C" Troop, "E" Troop, Company "F" and the Heavy Weapons Company, 141st Infantry, continued to hold the northern flank.

At approximately 0900 hours, the situation in the "B" Troop area was such that the Squadron Commander issued orders to "A" Troop to hold their position because he did not feel that "B" Troop should move out of the fight they were engaged in. The situation in the "B" Troop area continued to be active until 1300 hours when the CG VIth Corps ordered "A" Troop to Aspres. "B" Troop relieved "A" Troop, which then made the move.

At 1600 hours, Task Force Butler was reformed with the same order of Battle as before, less Troop "A". The task force was to be held in Division Reserve, assembled in the vicinity of Puy ST. Martin.

In the evening, "C" Troop was assigned to push aggressive but limited reconnaissance north approximately ten miles. The balance of the Squadron remained in Reserve with orders to perform maintenance and rest. Tec 4 Squire was the only casualty on this day.

25 August 1944 - At about 0100 hours, G-2 TFB advised the Squadron CO that the enemy was massing south of Montelimar with the obvious intention of launching a strong counter-attack at dawn.

The plan of the previous night was cancelled and the Squadron was alerted for a move. At 0400 hours, the Squadron was informed that the operational instructions issued by the 36th Division the previous day are known to be in enemy hands. With those instructions in their hands, the enemy knew the strength, composition and disposition of all the Allied forces in the area. During the morning, the enemy launched a limited counter-attack east of Montelimar and by 1500 hours they had penetrated 2500 yards toward Manasse. On the north the enemy launched a limited counter-attack at 1400 hours along the north and south banks of the Drome, capturing Grane and Alex. Reports of the battle were extremely confused as it see sawed back and forth, but by dark it was settled that the north bank from Alex west and the south bank from Grane was in enemy hands.

It is obvious that the enemy's objective in this sudden flurry of fighting is merely to escape. The enemy units participating are varied.

Captain Omer F. Brown was killed in action this date. (He was killed at Grane.)

August 26, 1944 - At dawn the Squadron was disposed as follows: Troop "B" was out-posting the high ground south of Drome. (South of the Drome River.) Troop "C" in a southwesterly direction to Blancham thence due west along the 71st Grid to connect with "B" Troop.

"B" Troop was supported with 4 M7 SP 105mm Assault Guns from "E" Troop and "C" Troop was supported with three of them. Company "F" was attached to Task Force Adams and was in the assembly area at 023-660.

Activity along the Squadron front was negligible. At 2100 hours, "B" Troop supported by Troop "E" was massed at the mouth of the gap at 990-800. "F" Company reverted to Squadron control and was ordered to assemble in the same area and in support of Troop "B". This force was to hold the right flank of TFB as it moved north from Loriol to la Coucourd, (the area where hill 300 was located), and to put direct fire on the enemy Troops that TFB pushed ahead of them. Casualties this day were PFC Sellers LIA

27 August 1944 - At 0800 hour B Troop moved out of it's area along the high ground south of Drome, (south of the Drome River not sure if there is a town named Drome). They were somewhere east of Loriol, possibly between Loriol and Grane.) They were replaced by elements of "C" Troop. "E" Troop's guns were trained along the Route National and in support of the TFB (Task Force Butler) columns moving up from La Coucourd as well as the 157th Infantry which was moving west on Livron from Crest. "B" Troop took up defensive positions along the mouth of the gap at 990-700 and was supported by three of "E" Troops M7s.

The "B" Troop sector was Quiet but the 3 guns under Lt. Foley inflicted a great deal of damage on the enemy convoys advancing along the Route National. These guns knocked out at least 40 vehicles and tied up the traffic along the road. Lt. Egbert's 4 guns from "E" Troop concentrated on the bridges and fords north of Loriol across the Drome effectively cutting the enemy's line of communications. There were no casualties on this date.

August 28 1944 - The Squadron held their positions and at 0900 hours the dispositions were: Troop "A" still attached to the 36th Division in the vicinity of Briancon conducting routine and uneventful reconnaissance; Troop "B" guarding the gap at 980-700 north to the grids 978-720; Troop "C" supporting Task Force Wilbur along the south bank of the Drome River in the vicinity of Grane; Troop "E" in position at 980-705 , covering the area from Loriol south to grids 950-700; Company "F" was held in support of the operation.

Company "F" was ordered to support an attack on Loriol by the 143rd Infantry. "B" & "C" Troops were to cover the left flank and rear respectively of this attack.

Lt Fitz-Randolph (Commanding Headquarters Troop) with a provisional Troop consisting of one AT Company, two light tanks, two medium tanks and one platoon of Infantry was covering the area at the entrance to the gap from 74 Grid south to the 71st grid and extending patrols west 1500 yards.

During the day, the enemy moved a great deal of transport from the south along the route covered by "E" Troops guns. Included in the convoys was a large number of truck drawn 88mm guns, Howitzers, horse drawn artillery and Infantry in trucks, wagons, on horses and on foot. After the traffic along the route ceased, a conservative estimate of the carnage was 50 vehicles and guns completely destroyed, an inestimable number of enemy personnel killed, and over a hundred vehicles and guns blocked along the road by their own destroyed materiel.

Casualties this date were: Tec5 Sellmer and Pvt. Morgan LWA; S/Sgt. Prettyman, Pfc. Santell and Pvt. Moore LIA. It was also ascertained today that Pvt. Flournoy who had been reported MIA on the 24th of this month had been KIA.

August 29, 1944 - By noon today, elements of the 157th Infantry entered the town of Loriol and the escape route of the German Army from southern France was severed. Troop "E" continued their devastating fire on the enemy columns approaching and trying to clear the main route to Loriol.

With Loriol in Allied hands, the troops posted strong guards to intercept enemy stragglers who having lost their motor equipment were seeking safety in the hills.

Casualties this day, were: Pvt. Stone LWA and Pvt. Brunner and Pvt. McKenzie MIA.

30 August 1944 - At 0230 hours the Squadron commander was informed that the mission of Task Force Butler was completed and that the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mecz) was relieved and ordered to report to Corps Headquarters for further orders. The Squadron was assembled and ordered to move to the Gas dump at Puy St. Martin. From there it is to move by M/T via Crest, Die, Aspres, and Grenoble to Moirans. The order of march was "C" Troop, "B" Troop, Headquarters Troop, Company "F" and "E" Troop. Troop "C" left Puy St. Martin at 0800 hours and the other Troops followed at half hour intervals.

Troop "C" arrived at Moirans at 1540 hours followed at half hour intervals by the "B" and Headquarters Troops. "E" and Company "F" gassed their vehicles and remained in the vicinity of Aspres all night. The entire trip was made without noteworthy incident. The total distance traveled was 140 miles. The Squadron is now on the right flank of the retreating enemy forces. Casualties for this day were: Cpl Chaklos and Pvt Waremburg MIA.

August 31, - Troop "C" was ordered to the vicinity of Meximieux, 20 miles northeast of Lyon. It left the Squadron at 0900.

"B" Troop left the assembly area at 0930 hours and proceeded to the vicinity of Amberieu, approximately 30 miles northeast of Lyon. The Troop is to be on the left flank of "C" Troop in this operation. Troops "B" and "C" are to spearhead the attack of the 45th Division toward the northwest. Troop "C" is directly leading the 179th Infantry. Both Troops encountered light enemy patrols in their assigned areas.

Troop "E" and "F" Company are to remain in the vicinity of Lagnieu with Squadron Headquarters. Troop "A", which has been operating in the vicinity of the Italian border, is expected to return to Squadron control.

From reports garnered from civilians and Maquis it was determined that the enemy is protecting his main line of escape with strong patrols and seems determined to prevent the Allied forces from cutting his line of escape. This presages stronger and more bitter fighting for the Squadron.

Troop "C" advanced toward Chalamont screening the movements of the 179th Infantry. At Chalamont the 1st Platoon was engaged in a fire-fight from which they were forced to withdraw leaving one bantam in the hands of the enemy. During the fight, seven Troop "C" men were separated from their Platoon and made their separate ways back to the Troop CP. There were no casualties on this date.

#### SUMMARY - AUGUST 1944

From the 1st of August 1944 to the 15th, the Squadron prepared for the Invasion of Southern France. On the 15th of the month the Squadron participated in the Invasion. Following the initial blow struck to the enemy forces along the Riviera, the Squadron pushed inland. Each of the three Reconnaissance Troops, C, B, and A with Tank and Assault Guns attached conducted aggressive action in front of the 3rd, 45th, and 36th divisions respectively. The attack on the southern coast had been so swift and effective that the Wehrmacht was thrown completely off balance and withdrew in disorder. The Allied forces pursued them northward relentlessly.

On the 17th of August, Task Force Butler was organized with this Squadron as a nucleus. Constantly jabbing at the enemy forces, the Task Force raced northward with its objective, the cutting off of the enemy forces that were attempting to escape from the south of France. So rapidly did they advance that the problem of supply was one of the main concerns of the Squadron. The only rations that it was possible to obtain at this time were Ks, Cs and Ten-in-ones. Trips over a hundred miles to bring up gas, oil, ammunition and rations were not uncommon. Vehicles were repaired on the road; at times under fire. Vehicles were given first echelon maintenance during lulls and rest was forgotten or taken wherever and whenever the Troops halted.

Although the Reconnaissance Troops bore the brunt of the fighting, the Support and Assault Troops were always on hand to supply the extra punch needed in a tough situation. The teamwork displayed by the troops when they were called upon for a concerted action was of such high degree that the enemy armored formations broke before them.

#### SEPTEMBER 1944

On September 1, 1944, the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mecz), commanded by Lt. Col. Charles J. Hodge was in the field in France. At this time, the Squadron was attempting to penetrate the enemy's right flank and was encountering strong resistance. The enemy forces seemed determined that their main axis of escape from Lyon north into Germany should not be penetrated. (see Map Pg 22A for Area of Operations from Sept 1, 1944 - Sept. 7th.)

The Squadron consists of three Reconnaissance Troops (A, B & C), an Assault Gun Troop (E), a Support Troop (Company F), a Medical Detachment and a Headquarters, Headquarters and Service Troop.

Troop "A" has been operating with the Task Force Bilbo in the vicinity of the Italian border and is expected to rejoin the Squadron on the 2nd. The balance of the Squadron was operating with the 45th Infantry Division. The strength of the Squadron this date is 46 Officers, 1 Warrant Officer and 680 Enlisted men.

1, September 1944 - Troop "A" was reported to be in the act of moving to rejoin the Squadron. Troop "B" reinforced with one Platoon of "F" Company Tanks screened the advance of the 180th Infantry north from Amberieu and Bessey. Light resistance was encountered but the Troop pushed ahead and reached a point 10km northeast of Bourg. At this point, "B" Troop halted and covered elements of the 180th Infantry as they crossed the bridge at 343-245. "C" Troop encountered strong opposition at Meximieux and withdrew southeast to establish strong defensive positions. Eight enemy tanks attacked "C" Troop's positions but were repulsed. Troop "E" and "F" Company were in reserve.



2, September 1944 - The Squadron continued its mission to the northwest. "B" and "C" Troops were conducting aggressive reconnaissance to ascertain what routes were available for a proposed attack on Bourg by the 45th Division. Troop "C" , on the left met stubborn resistance at Meximieux and was halted, but Troop "B " moved north very rapidly against little or no resistance. Troop "A" rejoined the Squadron and was ordered north to support Troop "B". At 1700 hours, Troop "B" was

ordered to set up roadblocks along the highway leading north from Bourg through Montrevel and Marboz. (To be more specific, the orders issued by General Truscott, VIth Corps Commander, were to "Seize and Hold" the village of Montrevel. "B" Troop continued north in order to accomplish this before morning. The Squadron Commander and Executive Officer (Maj. Robert F. J. McGarry) joined A and B Troops at Marboz. Major McGarry was placed in command of the two Reconnaissance Troops that were already present at Marboz and of Troop "E" and Company "F" which were en route to join A & B Troops. At midnight the forces were deployed south of Montrevel awaiting the coming morning when they were to attack the town.

September 3, 1944 - On this date, Troop "A" was ordered to follow Troop "B" in close support to establish road-blocks on the main highway leading northeast out of Montrevel. At 0700 hours Troop "B" after overcoming small arms and machine gun fire, occupied the town. Troop "B" set up local security and Part of Troop "A", which had followed "B" into the town, provided security for the bridge leading east out of Montrevel. The Troops engaged in separate fighting against Mark VI tanks and enemy infantry. By 1000 hours the situation had become so grave that the Commanding Officer of Troop "B" , Captain Wood, informed the Squadron Commander that he would have to abandon the town if reinforcements did not arrive. Captain Wood was told that reinforcements would be forthcoming. Meanwhile, dismounted patrols were detailed to find an escape route northeast of town.

At that point, General Carlton of VIth Corps, when asked for assistance for a counter-attack, told Col. Hodge to get it from the 45<sup>th</sup> Div. which gave him a Battalion of Infantry and returned C Troop for that attack which was set for 1600 hours. By 1300 hours the gravity of the situation had intensified to such an extent that the Troops were prepared to withdraw upon an moments notice from the Commanding Officer. At 1430 hours, they found themselves cut off by enemy infantry, AT guns, self-propelled guns and a great number of Mark VI tanks. When news of this was radioed to the Squadron Commander, Company "F" Tanks were committed to the battle. The forces within the town also launched an attack to coincide with the tank commitment ; but both attacks were futile, although the forces fought with extreme aggressiveness and determination.

Throughout the day the forces within the town were defenders in name only. Again and again the troops launched attacks against the greatly superior armor and numerical superiority of the enemy as they awaited the promised assistance. These forays kept the enemy off balance and in the dark as to the strength of the defenders. Unfortunately, their promised assistance never came. At 1555 hours, General Carlton, VIth Corps Chief of Staff, ordered the counter-attack cancelled.

At 1630 hours, Captain Wood called the Squadron Commander by radio and told him that it would be impossible to withdraw under any circumstances because of the great number of wounded personnel. This was the last message from Montrevel.

The aggressive tactics and personal bravery of the Troops within the town were of such a high degree that the enemy commander expressed considerable amazement that the force, which had opposed him, was so small numerically and so lacking in armor.

Our losses, though a great deal smaller than the enemy's, were very great. The losses in men and materiel were: All "B" Troop personnel less five men, who were either MIA, LWA, SWA plus three KIA.

Those KIA included Sgt Barsby, Cpl L. Stewart and Tec5 Renzi all of "B" Troop and S/Sgt Lawson of Company F. Troop "A" lost 2 Officers and 10 enlisted men. 20 Quarter ton 4x4s, 15 Armored cars and 2 light tanks were lost.

What was left of A and B Troops were reorganized into a Provisional A Troop, and the Squadron assembled in the area west of Marboz for the night.

A volunteer patrol was formed to enter the enemy held town of Montrevel to ascertain the results of the battle. The patrol left the Squadron CP at dusk and entered the town by midnight.

September 4, 1944 - The patrol, which entered Montrevel after dark on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, returned at 0600 hours and reported. The enemy had complete control of the town but they were preparing to leave. This patrol had conducted a noteworthy foray and the information which they garnered was of great value.

Troop "C" and the remains of Troops "A" & "B" were formed into six Reconnaissance Details each consisting of two Armored Cars, three 1/4 ton trucks and one half-track. One Platoon of infantry was attached to each Reconnaissance Detail. These provisional Reconnaissance Platoons were to move north from the vicinity of Marboz and reconnoiter west about three km from the main axis of advance along Route National 83. The mission to whom the Squadron was assigned was to cover the left flank of the 3rd division as it advanced north of Besancon. Light enemy resistance was encountered and by nightfall, the Squadron was at a point approximately 10km Southeast of Dole.

More information relative to the Montrevel encounter was gathered today. It was ascertained that Pvt. Kusina of Medical Detachment and Pvt. C. Fisher of "F" Company were seriously wounded and that the following were lightly wounded: Lt. Lee, Pvts. Benjamin and Purdom of "A" Troop; Tec5 Calabrese, Elliott, Halgren, and Kielty; PFCs Craig and Homrich and Pvt. Black of "B" Troop.

From reports which came in throughout the day, it was made known that: (a) the battle losses had not been as bad as was previously reported; (b) Troop "B" and one Platoon of Troop "A" had lost all of their vehicles; (c) of the 31 men known to have been wounded, the enemy left 12 of the more serious cases in care of Captain Van Ark and the Medical Detachment enlisted man.

During the day's action Cpl Chacklos and Pvt. Waremburg did not return from a patrol and were reported MIA.

5, September 1944 - The six Provisional Reconnaissance Platoons patrolled on a line from Poligny to Besancon toward the River Doubs. Their mission was to protect the left flank of the 3rd Division.

In the course of their reconnaissance the Troops ascertained that all bridges over the Doubs had been blown. The patrols contacted small groups of the enemy and found that they were composed of a heterogeneous collection of men from all branches and units of the enemy forces. While inspecting a bridge that had been blown one of the patrols engaged in a sharp encounter with an enemy patrol. The mission was completed under fire and the Platoon withdrew. Pfc. Joe Moreno of Troop "C" was killed in this action. (Note: by the patrol leader - It had been a 4 man bridge reconnaissance patrol from the 3rd Platoon. Joe, had not been selected to participate, he asked to do so and insisted on going with the Platoon Sergeant.)

Because of the valuable assistance that the Squadron is receiving from the FFI (French Forces of the Interior), they are able to accomplish many things that would have been impossible otherwise.

Captain Wood, Lt. Lutye, 1st Sgt. Grant and Pvt. Coe who had been captured at Montrevel, escaped and returned to the Squadron this date. The vehicles which were transporting these men to prison camp were shelled by American artillery and in the resultant confusion, Captain Wood and the others gained the cover of the woods.

After the artillery had ceased firing and the vehicles had left, they made their way back by various means.

(Note: There is no entry in this file of Daily Reports for the 6th of September.)

September 7, 1944 - The Squadron is now assembled in the vicinity of Arbois, France and the plans for reorganization of the Squadron are being completed. Men and materiel are being transferred to Troops "B" & "A" to bring them nearly to strength and a Platoon of infantry, (to be transported in 6x6s), has been added to each of the three Reconnaissance Troops.

The Squadron continues to protect the left flank of V1th Corps, but did not engage the enemy.

Lt. General Lucian K. Truscott, Commanding VI Corps, presented the following men with the Bronze Star Medal at Epinal, France, on this date:

1st Lt. Luty, Troop B	For heroic achievement in action.
2nd Lt. Bertoldi, Troop C	" " " " "
S/Sgt. Fisher, Company F	" " " " "
S/Sgt. Franklin, Troop E	" " " " "
S/Sgt. Prettyman, Troop C	" " " " "
Cpl Wilson, Troop C	" " " " "
Tec5 DiSalvatore, Troop C	For meritorious service.
Tec5 Sensibugh, Troop B	For heroic achievement in action.
PFC Young, Troop B	For meritorious service.
PVT Bluedog, Troop C	For heroic achievement in action.

Tec5 William A. Carroll, Troop C who was also to receive a Bronze Star Medal for heroism in Italy was killed in action and the decoration was forwarded to his next of kin.

8, September 1944 - On this date the Squadron was assigned a new mission; we are to advance north and northwest toward the River Saone. The Troops assembled in the vicinity of Ornans with instructions to cross the bridge at 660-43-. The troops crossed the bridge without incident and assembled east of it to await the morning when they were to move out to contact the enemy and determine the condition of all bridges. There were no casualties this date.

September 9, 1944 - Troops "A" and "C" continue to patrol west and northwest from Besancon toward the River Saone.

Troop "B" was in Squadron Reserve. Troop "A", was supported by a Platoon of Assault Guns from Troop "E" and the balance of Troop "E" and Company "F" were held in reserve. (See Map pg 25A- Area of operations Sept 9, 1944 - Nov 27.)

The enemy is employing strong delaying tactics and the greater part of our offensive is entrusted to the artillery and air force, which is attempting to disrupt the German retreat. There were no casualties this date.

(There are no Daily Reports in this file for the 10th, 11th and 12th of September)

September 13, 1944 - On the 13th, Patrols from "A", "B", & "C" Troops supported by "E" Troop guns and "F" Company tanks continued to perform reconnaissance north, northwest and west of Port-Sur-Saone. In this sector our patrols have met the most determined resistance yet encountered in France.

Troop "A" met heavy artillery in the vicinity of Neury-en-Vaux and Cpl. Newton, was wounded by shrapnel. By the end of the day, Troop "A" had reached the southern edge of Fleur Les Favarney.

Troop "C" ran into stiff enemy opposition but pushed ahead to Chaux Les Port where they bivouacked for the night. While en route to their objective a Troop "C" patrol engaged the enemy and Sgt. Pickerell was LWA.

Troop "B" was assigned to its first mission since its reorganization. The 1st Platoon to reconnoiter to the northwest, the 2nd Platoon to reconnoiter to the southwest and the balance of the Troop to move to Port-Sur-Saone to set up road blocks. A patrol engaged the enemy in a vicious firefight 2 miles west of Port-Sur-Saone and Tec5 Fisher was KIA. PFC Trier was LWA but remained on duty.

Squadron Headquarters was moved to Pusey-et-Epinoux and from there a perimeter guard and a patrol formed of Headquarters Troop personnel intercepted enemy stragglers.

14 September 1944 - Patrols from the Squadron continued to advance and protect the left flank of VI Corps toward the town of Remiremont.

Troop "B" supported by "F" Company tanks and a Platoon of infantry continued on outpost mission. Later in the day, the 1st and 2nd Platoons were sent to the northwest in an attempt to contact the French elements reported there. The 1st Platoon

contacted the French who proved to be the Fifth Chasseurs which unit had been trained by this Squadron while we were stationed in North Africa. Troop "E" supported the reconnaissance missions of Troops "A" and "C".

Pvt. Baldwin of Medical Detachment, who was attached to Troop "B" as an aid-man, was wounded by small arms fire at Faverney, France.

15, September 1944 - Patrols from the reconnaissance Troops continued to make little progress against the stiffening enemy resistance. The enemy has established numerous large patrols in this sector and the frequent skirmishes between these patrols and our Squadron has indicated a more determined enemy.

Troop "E" played the "Star" role in the Squadron's activities this date. Firing in all directions and scoring many direct hits, "E" Troop scored again and again on enemy patrols. Headquarters established roadblocks and set up heavy guards in the Squadron CP area when it was determined that enemy patrols were operating in the vicinity.

16, September 1944 - The Squadron seems to have softened the enemy resistance in this sector and many gains were registered.

Troop "A" moved forward on a reconnaissance mission from Amoncourt and Faverney. They met light roadblocks but these were quickly dealt with and the Troop pushed on aggressively to the town of Vauvillers, which they found clear. In this advance, Troop "A" had been supported by a Platoon of light tanks from Company "F". With the town secured, Troop "A" supported with a Platoon of light tanks from Company "F", out-posted two bridges north of Vauvillers. Troop "B" was held in Squadron reserve until 1030 hours and then they advanced to the north on the right of "A" Troop. Four British Colonial soldiers, who had escaped after being captured by the enemy, were contacted by Troop "B" and were helped along their way back to their units. Troop "C" performed reconnaissance north end east on the right of "B" Troop. The 2nd Platoon of "C" Troop engaged the enemy at St. Loup in a fire-fight and after being reinforced by the rest of the troop, took the town. In this action, Tec5 Gasset and Pvt, Hall were LWA. From their base in ST. Loup, Troop "C" successfully raided Magnoncourt after which they withdrew to St. Loup and outposted the town for the night. Troop "E", while in support of the reconnaissance troops, took four enemy soldiers prisoner and investigated reports that the balance of the POWs unit was in a nearby woods.

The report turned out to be false and the troop continued firing in support of the recon. troops. A civilian reported enemy in a nearby farmhouse. A small detail was taken from the guns and sent after them. The enemy were strongly entrenched and the "E" Troop men kept them under observation until the Infantry came up. The enemy was routed with the help of "E" Troop Guns, which had completed their mission. Company "F" was held in Squadron Reserve.

17, September 1944 - Troop "A" was held in Squadron Reserve while Troops "B" & "C" endeavored to advance toward Epinal and make contact with the American 3rd Army, which was reported operating northwest toward the Moselle River. Enemy resistance consisted of strong patrols and well defended road-blocks. "E" Troop supported the advance of Troops "B" & "C". "F" Company was held in Squadron Reserve with "A" Troop.

The Troops were involved in several small skirmishes but suffered no casualties this date.

September 18, 1944 - Squadron continues to protect the left flank of VI Corps and is working in close support of the 36th Division. The Squadron is now covering the sector assigned to the 45th Division, which is waiting to be relieved by elements of the First French Corps.

Troop "A" is in Squadron Reserve along with Company "F". "B" & "C" Troops continued to patrol north from ST. Loup toward Epinal. At 0830 hours the 2nd Platoon of troop "B" established contact with elements of the forces of the Normandy Front. The advance elements of the 1st Syrian Spahis Regiment, 2nd French Armored Division of the American 3rd Army and a patrol from Troop "B" met. thus joining the forces that invaded Northern and Southern France.

Contact has been established with a second group of parachutists. A group of British parachutists equipped with 8 bantams, each armed with at least two .30 caliber machine guns, was dropped in France three months ago. These men have been operating behind enemy lines.

19, September 1944 - Troop "A" has relieved Troop "C" which is now in Squadron Reserve along with Company "F" Patrols From "A" & "B" Troops supported by "E" Troop guns are probing the enemy defenses to the west of the Moselle along the outskirts of Epinal.

The enemy has a strong outpost line and this area is very heavily mined and booby-trapped. In the course of their reconnaissance, "A" Troop engaged some dismounted enemy in a fire fight and S/Sgt Aun and Sgt. Sochor were wounded and hospitalized.

The 3rd Platoon of troop "B" led by Sgt Stewart received its initial reconnaissance mission. The Platoon conducted itself very well.

20, September 1944 - Troop "C" is still in Squadron Reserve. "A" & "B" Troops supported by Troop "E" and company "F" continue to patrol in the vicinity of Epinal and are meeting heavy resistance. Troop "B" patrols reached Epinal but withdrew for the night. During a firefight, Cpl. Stelley and Pfc. Campbell were LIA. While clearing a roadblock 2 miles south of Epinal, Tec5 Scott was LWA when a hidden hand grenade exploded.

While on a tour of inspection, Lt General Patch visited the "B" Troop Command and then stopped at the Squadron CP while en route to 3rd Army Headquarters.

21, September 1944 - Troop "A" advanced to the edge of Epinal and was relieved by Infantry. Troop "B" was relieved and both Troops joined the balance of the Squadron in the vicinity of Faucogney.

Lt. General Truscott, the Commanding Officer of VI Corps, visited Squadron Headquarters to obtain first-hand information of the situation around Epinal. The General was very pleased and, upon leaving, commented on the wonderful job that the Squadron had done in Southern France.

In the late evening the Squadron received the mission of protecting the right rear of the 3rd Division. Troops "A" & "C" relieved elements of the 30th Infantry in the vicinity of Ecomagny.

22, September 1944 - Troop "B" is held in Squadron Reserve along with one Platoon of "F" Company tanks. "A" & "C" Troops augmented with Company "F" tanks and supported by "E" Troop guns continued to patrol to the right rear and flank of the 3rd Division..

Troop "E" guns fired a number of fire missions in support of the French elements in the sector including a mission that destroyed two enemy AT guns and two MG positions.

23, September 1944 - Patrol operations continued along the right flank of the 3rd Division. Contact is established with the 3rd French Cavalry of the 2nd French Corps. The Officers of this Cavalry Regiment were among the many trained by this Squadron during it's stay in North Africa.

Troop "A" maintained road-blocks in the vicinity of Faucogney. Troop "B" was held in reserve until 1500 hours and then committed to the lines in the vicinity of Esmoulieres to protect the right flank of the 3rd Division. Troop "C" reinforced the roadblock set up by the 15th Infantry at positions 1 km southeast of Evanhey. Troop "E" fired several missions in support of the French elements in the vicinity. One Platoon of "F" Company tanks supported Troop "B"s operations and the balance of the troop was held in reserve. A patrol from the Headquarters Troop lead by Sgt. Hildebrand and Cpl. Moore, investigated a civilian report that enemy soldiers were hidden in the vicinity and captured two who had taken refuge in a barn in the vicinity of the Squadron Command Post..

While on a reconnaissance mission, Troop "B" engaged in a fire- fight with an enemy patrol. In the fight, Lt. Repke was LWA but remained on duty.

At 1800 hours the Squadron was informed that it was now attached to the 3rd Division for tactical use.

24, September 1944 - Patrols of troops "A" & "B" continued to outpost a general line from La Mer northeast to Esmoulieres. Troop "C" reinforced this line by moving into Evouley and sending patrols to the northeast. Troop "E" supported the Reconnaissance Troops. A Platoon of tanks was attached to each of the reconnaissance Troops.

The rain and cold of the past few days have made this the most difficult sector the Squadron has operated in since we entered France. Our missions compel us to use all roads and to reconnoiter those we do not use. We are therefore forced to travel on many dirt roads, which the rains have turned into a sea of mud.

25, September 1944 - Troop "A" continued to outpost in the vicinity of Faucogney until 1800 hours when they were relieved by the French. Troop "A" then moved to La Proiselier and is being held in Squadron Reserve. Troop "B" is on reconnaissance missions but has made no enemy contact. Troop "C" maintained a roadblock and reported on an enemy roadblock northeast of Esmoulieres. Troop "E" fired in support of the French. Each of the 3 tank Platoons of Company "F" is attached to and is in support of one of the Reconnaissance Troops.

Two observation planes, which are attached to the Squadron, are temporarily grounded due to the inclement weather and their absence is keenly felt.

26, September 1944 - Troop "A" is in reserve and Troops "B"& "C" are maintaining roadblocks. Troops "B" & "C" each have one Platoon of "F" Company tanks attached and one Platoon of tanks has been detailed to act as security for the Squadron Command Post. Troop "E" has no targets this date.

27, September 1944 - Troop "A" has been taken out of Squadron Reserve and attached to the 7th Infantry to patrol along the northern banks of the Moselle River from Vacoux southeast to Ferdrupt.

Troops "B" & "C" conducted uneventful patrols. "E" Troop fired in support of and attack by elements of the French Army. "F" Company tanks were inactive.

It was found possible to transport a few of the men to Bains Les Bains for baths at that world-famous spot.

Tec5 Allsbrook was LWA when his patrol was shelled by enemy artillery, but he remained on duty status.

28, September 1944 - Troops "A", "B" and "C" continue their reconnaissance but have made no contact with the enemy. Because of poor roads and the weather, most of the patrols have been on foot.

The Squadron Command Post was established at Rupt Sur Moselle. Shortly after the Command Post was set up, a French civilian requested aid to retrieve the body of his wife who had been killed during an artillery attack. Lt. Moore was detailed to assist the civilian and left the CP in a bantam with him. While proceeding across a field, the bantam struck a mine killing the civilian and slightly wounding Lt. Moore and another civilian. Lt Moore was evacuated to a hospital.

29, September 1944 - The Squadron was relieved from attachment to the 3rd Division and returned to the control of VI Corps. The Squadron moved from their positions and proceeded to the vicinity of Sercoeurs. The entire Squadron was assembled in the vicinity of Sercoeurs by 2100 hours.

The mission as assigned to the Squadron this date is to reconnoiter to the north and northeast maintaining contact with the 15th American Corps.

The road march from Rupt Sur Moselle to Sercoeurs, a distance of 55 miles, was very difficult because of the rain and the condition of the roads. There was one accident to mar the march. A bantam in which Lt. Carlile, Pvt. Karleskint and Pvt. Petrowski were riding was side-swiped by a 6x6 and all three men were hospitalized .

30, September 1944 - Troop "A" was held in reserve and Troops "B" & "C" performed reconnaissance to the north and northeast from Rambervilliers toward Luneville and Baccarat. One patrol from the Reconnaissance Troops contacted reconnaissance elements of the 2nd French Armored Division, which is part of the XV American Corps. Troop "E" had no activity. "F" Company was in bivouac awaiting orders.

The first part of the month saw the Squadron continue it's rapid advance. The battle of Montrevel slowed the Troops down but with commendable ingenuity, the Troops continued to operate as reconnaissance details though it had become necessary to carry some of the personnel in 6x6 trucks. (The third Platoon of "C" Troop, for example was divided into two sections and assigned dismounted support duties for the Recon, Platoons, Each section was transported in a 6x6.)

The battle of Montrevel reflected great credit upon the participating Troops and was one of the hardest blows that this Squadron, as a unit, has dealt the enemy.

The second part of the month was a great deal harder for the Troops. The advances were slow and the gains were negligible or non-existent. At times, the troops fought as Infantry but throughout the month all that was done was done well and vigorously.

The Medical Corps personnel, although unmentioned in the History, rated high in the esteem of all the men. Always on the job and willing, these men were a great help to the wounded and a great comfort to the men who were to go to fight the enemy..

The strength of the Squadron at the close of September is 39 Officers, 1 Warrant Officer and 681 EM.

## OCTOBER 1944

On the 1st of October 1944 the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mecz), commanded by Lt. Col. Charles J. Hodge, was in the field in France.

The Squadron is fresh from a swift and triumphant advance from the Riviera Coast of France to this area, which is the gateway to Germany. Throughout the campaign the Squadron has, because of its boldness and initiative, been able to make large and sweeping gains but, at present, the terrain limits the Squadron to a straight push.

The Squadron consists of three Reconnaissance Troops (A, B, & C), an Assault troop (E), a Support Troop (F Company), a Medical Detachment and a Headquarters, Headquarters and Service Troop.

The strength of the Squadron this date is 39 Officers, 1 Warrant Officer and 679 Enlisted Men.

October 1, 1944 - Troop "A" was in Squadron Reserve, Troop "B" sent out patrols to the northeast toward Baccarat and the River Meurthe. Troop "C" is in the same sector and succeeded in obtaining a position from which they could direct Troop "E" artillery fire on enemy positions and movements. The first concentration fired by "E" Troop accounted for seven enemy personnel and the results of the two succeeding concentrations were unknown. In the course of Troop "B's" reconnaissance, the second platoon was led by Sgt. Parsoff who had advanced in front of the platoon and become separated from it. He is believed to be MIA.

2, October 1944 - The Squadron mission is to secure the road from Rambervillers toward Baccarat and is responsible for all the area to the east of the road. Troop "B" established a strong roadblock at the edge of the woods south of Anglemont. This roadblock was supported by two Platoons of "F" Company light tanks, by patrols from "A" Troop, which operated in front of the position, and by a Platoon of Infantry and two 57mm Anti-tank guns which protected the road-block from any possible threat from the northeast. Troop "A", in the course of their patrol, encountered stiff resistance, but was able to beat off the enemy and succeeded in taking 29 prisoners. Troop "C" is in reserve and "E" Troop received no fire missions this date.

Sgt. Parsoff, who was reported MIA, was found in a French Hospital with wounds in his arm and chest. The enemy had discovered him and thinking that he was about to die, left him after taking his papers.

3, October 1944 - The tactical situation remains the same. The road-block is being protected by Troops "A", "B", "E" and Company "F". Troop "C" is still being held in reserve. The Squadron has once more obtained air support. This day, three L5 Planes were attached to the Squadron.

The Troop CPs are established in Rambervillers and this town has been subjected to heavy shelling. In order to be better able to treat casualties, the Medical Detachment has established two Aid Stations, one in Sarcoeur and one in Rambervillers. During the shelling of Rambervillers, Captain Martin, an attached Medical Officer, was LWA and evacuated to a Hospital.

CWO Fort, 1st Sgt. Grant, S/Sgt. Middlebrook and S/Sgt. Deleo received Battlefield Commissions this date.

October 4, 1944 - Troops "A", "C", "E" and company "F" maintaining the roadblock south of Anglemont. A great deal of artillery fire has been received in this area and all the personnel are dug in and fighting as Infantrymen. S/Sgt. Hahnenfeld was LWA by artillery fire this date. "B" Troop is in reserve. The small dismounted patrols that the troops have sent out have had little contact with the enemy other than the meetings with other patrols sent out by the enemy.

(Editorial comment) - "C" Troop was holding dug in positions at the edge of a wooded area facing barbed wire fenced open fields of a farm.



The farmhouse to our front was vacant, and every night, the reserve platoon sent out patrols to reconnoiter to and beyond the farm house. Generally, the German patrols did likewise, and an exchange of small arms fire would ensue with the first patrol to reach the house using it to establish cover for a base of fire. Meanwhile, after dark, French in civilian clothes, (Army or FFI) would go into enemy territory, through our positions on the road, in order to bring us information on activities behind enemy lines.

October 5, 1944 - Troops "A", "C", "E" and Company "F" are still defending the roadblock. Troop "B" is being held in reserve.

All of the Troops were subjected to artillery fire throughout the day and night. This sector has become the center of an artillery duel. "E" Troop has received no missions. There were no casualties this date.

October 6, 1944 - Troop "A" has been replaced by Troop "B" on the line; "A" Troop is now in reserve in the vicinity of Bult, France. Troops "C", "E" and Company "F" are reinforcing the roadblock.

Light and scattered artillery and mortar fire was received by the Troops throughout the day. The enemy artillery fire is becoming less intense in this area.

Troop "E" had a number of fire missions in the course of which they succeeded in silencing a battery of artillery.

6, October 1944 - Troop "A" is still in reserve and Troops "C", "B" and "F" Company continue support of the roadblock south of Anglemont. The enemy continues to rely mostly on artillery fire.

Captain Simon Doilon of the FFI who has been attached to the squadron for liaison with the FFI was killed by sniper fire this day. The Captain had been working with "B" Troop. His loss will be keenly felt by all who knew him.

October 8, 1944 - Troop "A" has relieved "C" Troop on the road-block and Troop "C" is now in reserve at Bult. Troop "B" remained on the line supported by "E" troop and Company "F".

"A" Troop directed fire from "E" troop on Anglemont and Nossencourt. Enemy mortar and artillery fire was directed on the troop positions throughout the day. An "F" Company tank ran over a mine, but there were no casualties. The tank was wrecked and it was necessary to drag it off the field while under enemy observation. Smoke was used and when the tank was completely hidden, the Headquarters Troop Tank retriever dragged it off the field.

Lt. Seidel of company "F" was LWA by shrapnel this date but remained on duty.

9, October 1944 - The Squadron continues to maintain its roadblock south of Anglemont. Troop "C" is in reserve.

Major Robert F. J. McGarry, the Squadron Executive Officer, was hospitalized this date. Major Samsel has been appointed Executive Officer until his return.

Artillery fire was received in the area this date, but the Squadron suffered no casualties.

October 10, 1944 - The tactical situation is static along the Squadron front and there were no casualties reported this date. The weather is very poor and visibility is limited

Captain Crone and Captain Carnevali, of Headquarters troop, Sgt. Newton of "A" Troop, Cpl. Finlay and Pvt, Moran of "B" Troop were awarded the Bronze \star for Heroic Achievement in Action. The medals were awarded par GO 32, Headquarters, VI Corps, dated 3, October 1944.

At the ceremony held in the grounds of VI Corps Headquarters, LT General Truscott, Commanding VI Corps, presented Captains Crone and Carnevali with the Bronze Star Medal. Sgt. Newton who was to have received his medal at the same time was in the hospital recuperating from wounds received in action, Cpl. Finlay and Pvt. Moran, who were also to be present to be decorated, are Missing in Action.

General Marshall, Chief of Staff, United states Army made a short inspection of this sector today.

October 11, 1944 - The tactical situation within the Squadron has not changed. Troop "B" is now in reserve at Bult and Troop "C" is in the line in place of "B".

In accordance with GO #211, Headquarters, 45th Division, dated 20, September 1944, a Bronze Star Medal was awarded to 1st Lt. Lutye and 2nd Lt. Grant for Heroic Achievement in Action.

October 12, 1944 - The Squadron Tactical situation remains the same. The enemy artillery, which has been shelling the squadron positions throughout the past week, scored today. At 0730 hours, approximately 18 rounds of enemy artillery landed on and in the vicinity of the Troop "E" Command Post. Two men, Pvt Hebert and Pvt Williams were killed. Nine men were LWA; they are: S/Sgt. Blank, Sgt. R. Kelly, Tec4 Grove, Cpl. Chitty, Cpl. Colunio, Tec5 Gilliam, Pfc. Collins, Pfc. Wasserford and Pvt. G. Weaver.

Fourteen NCOs of the Squadron went before a board of officers to be interviewed with a view to receiving battlefield commissions. These men, if accepted, will be commissioned in the Infantry.

Air activity has increased. Two enemy fighters were over the Squadron CP during the afternoon. Many of our bombers flew over the squadron area en route to Germany.

October 13, 1944 - The Tactical situation is static except for small gains by the Infantry in the vicinity. Enemy artillery again inflicted casualties on the Squadron. Tec 5 Mixon was KIA by artillery fire at 1000 hours. Sgt. Nelson and Tec5 Flynn were LWA by artillery fire but remained on duty. Tec 5 Meyers was LWA and evacuated to a hospital.

October 14, 1944 - The Squadron continues to maintain the roadblock south of Anglemont. Troop "A" relieved "C" Troop on the line. "C" is now in reserve at Bult.

Although the Squadron is maintaining a roadblock, the troops are by no means inactive. Today, "E" troop fired two missions, which were directed by a reconnaissance patrol sent out by "B" Troop. The part, which the Reconnaissance Troops play in the roadblock, is aggressive. They send out small patrols, which, constantly jab at the enemy and keeps him from bringing the fight to us. They find and direct fire upon enemy artillery, which shells our positions.

October 15, 1944 - The line Troops continue to maintain the roadblock south of Anglemont and are maintaining contact with the enemy in the vicinity of Baccarat. A patrol from "A" Troop entered Anglemont and reported it clear of enemy.

Captain Wood, Tec5 Dobyons of Headquarters Troop and Pvt Sager of Troop "B" were rotated to the United States today. Cpl. Bartel of troop "E" and Tec5 Schneider of Medical detachment were granted 30 day furloughs in the United States.

October 16, 1944 - There was no change along the entire Corps front although the 45th and 36th Infantry divisions are maintaining strong pressure against the enemy.

Thirteen Enlisted men of the Squadron were commissioned 2nd LTs. in the Infantry this date. The men who were commissioned are: 1st Sgt. Repke, S/Sgt. Harper, S/Sgt. Madigan, and Sgt. Casterline of Troop "A"; Sgt. W. Fitzpatrick and Sgt. Settle of Troop "C" ; S/Sgt. Franklin and Sgt. E. Dunn of Troop "E"; S/Sgt. Partelow, S/Sgt. Hoffman, Sgt. Bennert and Sgt. Sellaro of Company "F" and T/Sgt. H. Johnson of Headquarters Troop. Sgt. R. Kelly of Troop "E" who was to receive his commission this date is in the hospital recuperating from wounds received in action.

October 17, 1944 - While in support of the Squadron's roadblock south of Anglemont, Troop "E" was assigned one fire mission. Eight of the enemy are known to have been killed in the dug-in positions on which "E" Troop scored direct hits.

Because of our long stay in this area, the enemy has complete knowledge of our positions and the heavy vehicles are no longer moved. When a Troop is relieved, the vehicles remain in place and the crews are changed.

October 18, 1944 - The only activity along the entire Squadron front occurred when a patrol led by Lt. Middlebrook breached the wire and mine defenses of the enemy and engaged in a firefight. In the course of the fight eight of the enemy are known to have been killed and an undetermined number wounded. Our only casualty was Lt. Repke who was LWA but remained on duty.

In the future the pressure against the enemy lines will be constant and will be heavier than it has been. The patrols will be more aggressive and more extended.

19, 20 and 21, October 1944 - Other than the light artillery fire to which the Squadron has been intermittently subjected, there has been no activity for the past three days. The patrols that have been sent out ranged far and wide but were unable to lure the enemy into a fight.

On the 21st, Tec4 Robbins and Pvt. Bush, Company "F" were LWA and Pvt. Hills SWA by artillery fire.

October 22, 1944 - The Squadron is now attached to the 36th Combat Engineers. Our mission is the same and the troops continue to patrol toward Baccarat. The weather continues to be unfavorable and the ground is a sea of mud. The enemy continues to harass our men with sporadic artillery fire

Lt. Claude, who has been attached to the squadron from the French Army, was relieved and has been assigned to command a Battalion of Ukrainians. Lt. Claude, who had been attached to the Squadron as part of the Proust Mission, was of inestimable value to the Squadron. He very often did work alone that would have been impossible for a platoon to accomplish.

23 and 24, October 1944 - The Squadron continues to hold the roadblock south of Anglemont and to patrol toward Menil-sur-Belvitte. It is in this area that the patrols most often encounter resistance including strong enemy patrols and wire and mine defenses. Light artillery fire was hitting the Squadron throughout both days and one casualty was inflicted, Pvt. Wood, Troop "C" was LWA by shrapnel on the 23rd.

October 25, 1944 - Troop "C" sent out two patrols at daybreak. One of the patrols reached a quarry near Menil-sur-Belvitte and engaged the enemy in a fire-fight. They pushed aggressively into the outskirts of Menil-sur-Belvitte. The other patrol advanced to the enemy wire and engaged the enemy. Troop "C" had only one casualty as a result of both of these engagements. Tec5 Douer was LWA by a gun shot wound in the cheek.

While supporting the roadblock, Pvt. Niecielski, Troop "B" and Sgt, Driscoll of Company "F" were LWA by shrapnel.

Lt. Col. Hodge, Captain Van Ark, Lt. Cronin, Lt. Lutye, Lt. Middlebrook, Tec4 P Johnston, Sgt. Robbins, Pvt. Kusina, Tec5 Alexander, Cpl. Young, Pvt. Bluedog and SSgt. Fisher were ordered to report to VI Corps Headquarters to receive decorations. Lt. General Truscott, Commanding VI Corps, presented the awards.

26, October 1944 - The Troops conducted aggressive reconnaissance against the enemy. The patrols worked to within several hundred yards of Menil and did not encounter opposition.

Cpl. Dougherty was SWA by a Schu mine this date. Although there have been an abundance of mines encountered, this is one of the few casualties we have suffered from them.

October 27, 1944 - Two strong patrols were sent out to determine if the enemy was still in position or if he had pulled back. One patrol moved out to the north, in the direction of Menil, along the road. After they had advanced approximately 1000 yards, they drew observed flat trajectory and high angle fire. Troop "E" artillery was called upon and while the patrol withdrew under their supporting fire, they silenced a mortar battery. The patrol to the east reached the enemy's defensive wire and probed behind it. The enemy reacted to this patrol strongly as they had to the patrol at Menil. The woods our Troops were holding were covered with 300 rounds of artillery, 36 rounds of Nebelwerfer and 30 rounds of mortar. Both patrols withdrew.

Our casualties were: Tec4 Meehan, Tec5 Quinn and Pvt, Riggs of Company "F", and Pvt. Viereckt of "A" Troop; all LWA by artillery fire.

October 28, 1944 - The Squadron was relieved of assignment to the 36th Combat Engineers and were assigned the area that the Engineers had covered. A Battalion of the Engineers will remain to support the Squadron while the balance of their unit will be moved elsewhere. The 59th AFA Battalion has also been assigned to support the Squadron.

Troop "C" moved light patrols against the enemy's defensive wire and up to the draw in Menil. A fire- fight resulted and the patrol withdrew after inflicting six known casualties on the enemy.

The enemy artillery was not very active during the day, but after dark, he commenced to fire on the Troop areas. The casualties for the day were Pvt. Ward, Troop "C" LWA.

October 29, 1944 - The early morning was spent by the Troops in strengthening the positions to which they had moved during the night. At 1000 hours Troop "A" was ordered to occupy the town of Brou and to move an eight man patrol into the town of Jeanmenil and occupy it if possible Both towns were unoccupied but were mined and booby-trapped. Two armored vehicles were damaged by AT mines and one armored car received a flat tire from an anti-personnel mine. Two of the passengers in the vehicles were injured, and one man was injured by a Shu mine. The Squadron sector was quiet during the day with only a little artillery coming in.

The casualties for the day were: Pfc. Salerno, S/Sgt. Panzino, Tec5 Ciminera, Tec5 Jacobson, Tec5 Marcucci, Tec5 McConnell and Captain Fitz-Randolph of Troop "A"; all LWA by mine explosions.

October 30, 1944 - At daybreak Troops "A and "B" supported by Company H, 36th engineers moved out on patrol.

Troop "A", which was to reconnoiter north and east from Brou found all trails through the forest in that vicinity impassable for vehicles. A dismounted patrol entered the woods and proceeded through them, later joining the vehicles to the east.

The town of Brou was very heavily mined and again the mines caused casualties.

Company "F" supported H Company, 36th Engineers (C) with three light tanks. One of these tanks struck a mine and in the resultant explosion Tec 4 Mittlesdorf was injured and died before he reached the hospital.

Troop "B" moved north until they reached a roadblock just south of Menil where they received small arms and tank or SP fire from the roadblock.

Casualties for the day were: Sgt. Ward, Troop "B", SWA by a Schu mine. Tec5 Blakstad, Tec 5 Sims, PFC Nobile and Pfc. Wallace, Company "F" LWA by mines. Sgt. Herrman and Pvt. Dunn, Troop "A" LWA.

October 31, 1944 - Troop "B" continued to probe the enemy defenses of Menil which they found to be exceptionally complete. The defenses included deep dugouts and a strong garrison. Troop "B" patrols met heavy resistance but suffered no casualties.

Troop "A" tried to move from Brou through St. Benoit, but found the Infantry moving along this same route and meeting continuous and heavy resistance. A dismounted patrol was sent out to protect the engineers while they worked on a road-block. This patrol received small arms fire and shortly thereafter, a heavy concentration of artillery. No casualties resulted in either action.

Troop "C", on outpost, covered the advance of troop "B" and secured a target for the "E" Troop guns. The target, an ammunition dump, was hit and destroyed.

Although this was a very active day and a great deal was accomplished, it is a tribute to the training and resourcefulness of the men of the Squadron that there were no casualties.

#### OCTOBER SUMMARY

October was a very difficult month for the Squadron. The Troops were doing an unfamiliar and distasteful job, but they did it well. To men used to swift advances and to waging war from a vehicle, the stationary trench war of the past month has been a great trial, but the breakthrough is in sight and the Squadron continues to fight toward that end.

#### NOVEMBER 1944

November 1, 1944 - The strength of the Squadron at this point in time is 43 Officers and 686 enlisted men.

Throughout most of the month of October the Squadron was engaged in a piece of grand strategy calculated to cause the enemy to shift his forces. Through constant hammering at the enemy lines, this had been accomplished and the results, of this were apparent in today's actions. The Squadron coordinated with the French Forces, which successfully assaulted the famous Crystal Factory Town of Baccarat and the Squadron made advances to the St, Barbe -Thiaville road.

Troop "A" , in the course of their advance toward the St. Barbe -Thiaville road met no enemy resistance but experienced a great deal of difficulty because of the numerous mines, booby-traps and roadblocks. Troop "B" , reinforced by a platoon of Company "F" light tanks entered Menil in the early morning and from there sent out strong patrols.

A platoon of Company "F" tanks supported the attack of the 3rd Battalion of the 36th Engineers (C) on St. Barbe and liberated the town by 0900 hour. When the route through Menil had been cleared, Troop "C" moved through to St, Barbe, established a CP there and sent out patrols. While moving through Menil, a Troop "C" armored car exploded a mine and in the resultant explosion Tec4 Rankin, Tec5 Rogers and Tec5 O'Crowley were LWA and hospitalized.

At 1930 hours the Squadron was attached to the 45th Division and was assigned to a new mission.

Troop "C" will remain in its present position in the vicinity of ST. Barbe and Menil and the balance of the Squadron will go to Baccarat and secure the high ground one mile east of the town. "A" Troop will go into position in the right, "A" Battalion of the 36th Combat engineers will hold the center and "B" Troop will hold the left. Troop "A" will send patrols to the southeast and south and "B" Troop will patrol the roads to the northeast and east.

Colonel Boot commanding the Proust Mission left the Squadron today to go to the Proust Headquarters in Paris.

November 2, 1944 - Troops "A", "B", "E" and Company "F" had completely occupied their positions east of Baccarat by 0300 hours. The change in sectors had been accomplished without any mishap although the entire trip was over mined territory. Troop "C" was held in reserve at Baccarat, France.

Troop "B" patrols operated in the forward areas and kept contact with the French forces operating on our left. Troop "A" sent dismounted patrols to the southeast. These made no contact with the enemy but a mounted platoon, supported by a section of Company "F" tanks, were engaged by the enemy in the vicinity of Roan L'Etape. A Mark IV tank supported by AT guns and a great amount of small arms, fired on the patrol at a range of 200 yards. An armored car and a 1/2 ton were destroyed by this fire and one tank was hit and had to be abandoned. The patrol withdrew and reorganized. In the evening, under the supporting artillery fire of the French forces, a patrol moved out to examine the abandoned tank and try to locate Tec 4 Pelser, the tank driver who was missing. Upon reaching the tank, the patrol ascertained that the motor was still running and that Tec4 Pelser had been killed instantly.

The enemy heard the movements of the patrol and opened fire on the tank but Lt. Beck and Sgt, Jamerson entered the tank and brought it and Tec 4 Pelser back to the Squadron CP. Pfc. Hardy, who was also in the tank, was also LWA by shrapnel.

November 3, 1944 - Troop "A" made two attempts to set up an OP but were driven back by artillery fire and by enemy personnel who had fortified the position desired.

Troops "A" and "B" sent mounted patrols to the northeast of Baccarat and found the territory cleared of enemy. Troop "C", in an attempt to establish an artillery OP reached the high ground north of La Chappel but found the area to be so heavily wooded as to be of no value as an OP.

At 1200 hours the Squadron, reinforced by the 3rd Battalion, 36th Engineers (C) and Company "B", 636th TD Bn, was ordered to relieve Combat command "D" of the French 2nd DB. Troop "B" supported by a section (heavy) of Company "F" tanks, H Co., 35th Engineers and a platoon of TD, was ordered to relieve the French in Vacqueville and Merviller. The elements of Troop "B" and their supporting forces entered Vacqueville to relieve the French forces there. The enemy was soon aware of the excellent target presented and shelled the town very heavily but did no damage to "B" Troops force.

"A" Troop was ordered to relieve the French at Bertichamps. Co. "G", 36th engineers, heavy section of Company "F" tanks and one platoon of TDs were attached for this operation. Soon after "A" Troop and their support entered Bertichamps, the enemy took advantage of the concentration of troops and shelled the town heavily. By dark, all elements were in position to take over the sector from the French in the morning.

Troop "E", which was located near Merviller, fired in support of the Reconnaissance Troops. They knocked out 2 enemy trucks, scored two direct hits on gun emplacements and got four direct hits on a house that was known to be occupied by the enemy.

November 4, 1944 - At 1100 hours, the French forces were officially relieved by our reinforced Squadron.

The French on our left were amazed at the small force that was to relieve them but since the entire force at the Squadron's disposal had been committed, there was nothing to be done but go through with it.

The change of personnel brought about a great deal of activity, which resulted in the enemy firing over 200 rounds of artillery and rockets on both Bertichamps and Vacqueville.

Routine patrols were the order of the day for the Reconnaissance Troops and their supporting elements. No casualties were suffered although the enemy artillery was extremely active at times.

November 5, 1944 - Troops "A" and "B" (reinforced), continue to hold their positions in Bertichamps and Vacqueville respectively. One platoon from "C" Troop was sent out to reinforce Troop "B" and the balance of the Troop attempted to find an OP in the vicinity of Thiaville. Troop "E" fired effectively on an enemy MG emplacement and on an enemy held Chateau. Company "F" platoons, were supporting the Reconnaissance Troops, and forming a Squadron reserve.

Tec4 Christensen, Company "F", was LWA during and artillery barrage. 1st Sgt. John, Troop "B" was LWA by artillery fire.

November 6, 1944 - Troop "A" remained in position. "B" Troop was relieved by Companies "H" & "I" of the 36th Engineers. They took over positions on hill 301 and were responsible, with Troop "C", for the Merviller Area. The second platoon of Troop "C" was still scouring the woods in the vicinity of La Chappel and Thiaville in a search for an OP. The 1st and HQ platoons of Company "F" were held in reserve and the balance of the Company supported the Reconnaissance troops during the day. Troop "E" fired on gun positions, enemy personnel and on the town of Pexonne.

Troop "C" engaged in a firefight with enemy located in dugout and machine gun positions, forcing them to withdraw, leaving two of their officers dead. All the Troops received sporadic artillery fire during the day, but Pvt. Anderson, troop "B" was the only casualty; (LWA).

November 7, 1944 - Troops "A", "B" and "C" sent out dismounted patrols to ascertain the enemy strength, and to hunt out artillery targets.

Troop "A" patrol engaged the enemy in a sharp fire fight in which Sgt. Orlic was LWA by small arms fire. The other patrols were uneventful, but a great deal of information was gathered relative the enemy strength and disposition.

The enemy has shifted his artillery fire from the Vacqueville area (Troop "B"), to the Bertichamps area (Troops "A" & "C"). Over 200 rounds of enemy artillery and some rockets were received in the vicinity of Bertichamps.

General Brooks, Commanding VI Corps, visited the Squadron CP and seemed well pleased with the information gathered by the patrols.

November 8, 1944 - The Troop dispositions remain the same with patrols being sent out from the Reconnaissance Troops in search of information as to enemy strength and disposition. Heavy artillery fire was received by Troops "A" and "C" but no damage resulted. A platoon from "C" Troop established an OP between Thiaville and La Chappel.

The weather has continued to be bad and this is regretted because it has grounded our air observation making it impossible to find the artillery positions that have been shelling us.

November 9, 1944 - At 0600 hours, the 45th Division with which the Squadron had been working, was relieved by the 100th Division and the Squadron was attached to the latter for tactical operations.

The 59th AFA which has worked in close conjunction with the Squadron during most of our time in action was also relieved of its supporting mission in this area.

The Troops continued in their positions and continue to patrol aggressively but encountered no enemy. Enemy artillery fire continued to be heavy and the weather bad.

November 10, 1944 - The 3rd Battalion, 36th Engineers, who have been attached to the Squadron and who have done such wonderful work both as Engineers and as Infantry, were ordered to return to their Regiment by 0600 hours tomorrow. Troop "A" received orders to move from Bertichamps to Mervillers by daylight tomorrow. Troop "B" continued to send out patrols. Troop "C" prepared to take over the 36th Engineers positions. Troop "E" fired on the town of Pexonne and started large fires. One factory blew up when it was hit and several other explosions were caused by the fires "E" Troop had started.

November 11, 1944 - Troop "A" moved from Bertichamps to Mervillers. Troop "C" completed taking over the 36th Engineers positions. Troop "B" supported by one platoon from Co "I" 399th Infantry was given the mission of securing the town of Veney by daybreak tomorrow morning. Routine patrols were dispatched but no enemy were contacted. Troop "E" was inactive and Company "F" supported the Reconnaissance patrols.

November 12, 1944 - Troop "B" secured Veney on schedule but did not remain in the town because it had been a very good target for enemy artillery in the past. Troops "A and "C" conducted routine patrol assignments.

Friendly artillery was exceptionally active during the day and night.

November 13, 1944 - A Squadron Rest Center was established at Baccarat and each Troop was assigned a quota of enlisted men to attend.

Troop "A" conducted routine patrols. At 1140 hours, 17 rounds of artillery landed in the vicinity of the Troop CP damaging one armored car and a bantam. Troop "B" was still unable, because of the enemy artillery, to occupy Veney, but remained in the vicinity of that town and sent out patrols. Captain Nugent was assigned to the Staff this date and Troop "C" is now commanded by Captain Shenk.

Troop "C" sent out patrols in an effort to obtain a position that commanded a good view of Pexonne but these patrols met stiff resistance in the form of artillery, mortar and small arms fire. Troop "E" fired one mission on the enemy OP in a steeple in Pexonne. The mission was accomplished in short order. Company "F" is supporting the Reconnaissance Troops.

November 14, 1944 - The troops remained in the same position and sent out patrols as usual. A "B" Troop patrol encountered heavy enemy MG and small arms fire in the vicinity of Neufmaisons but was able to withdraw without suffering any casualties. The other patrols had encountered no enemy.

The Squadron, both officers and men were paid today.

November 15, 1944 - Troop "B" was relieved by Troop "A" and assembled in Squadron reserve less one platoon which maintained an OP on hill 301. Troop "A" immediately sent patrols out toward Pexonne and although they made no contact with the enemy, they did discover that the road was heavily mined and booby-trapped. Troop "E" supported Troop "C" with Zone fire and Registrations.

November 16, 1944 - All Troops in the same positions and sending out patrols. The Assault guns had numerous targets the most noteworthy of which was a direct hit on an enemy CP, and another barrage which caused the withdrawal of enemy tanks and personnel from the Troop "C" area. This fire was directed by the Reconnaissance Troops and the Air OP which was finally able to take to the air after a long period of inclement weather.



November 17, 1944 - Troop "A" received the additional support of five medium tanks from the 753rd Tank Battalion and five light tanks from company "F" were ordered to take over the area formerly held by Company "E" 388th Infantry. Troop "A" took over at 0900 hours and a patrol worked its way to within two or three hundred yards of an enemy position and directed fire from Troop "E" on the position. The results of the firing, as far as we could determine were good. Troop "C" ran patrols to the east and southeast of Vacqueville. One of the patrols encountered a new field of Schu mines, which had been planted during the night. Three men were casualties: Sgt Nelson SWA, Tec5 Gallagher LWA, and Pvt. Warner SWA. The patrol evacuated the men under fire and artillery fire was directed upon them all the way back to the CP.

November 18, 1944 - Troops "A" and "B" supported by medium and light tanks moved into Neufmaisons without opposition. Troop "C" remained in Vacqueville on the alert and ready to assist the other troops if they were hard pressed. The light tanks of Company "F" were attached to troops "A", "B" and "C" for the day's operations. Troop "E" received no fire missions, The 100th Reconnaissance Troop was attached to Troop "A" and is to work in conjunction with that Troop on patrols, etc.

Troop "B" entered Neufmaisons from Vacqueville and found numerous mines along the road. Troop "A" moved from Veney and found the road clear. When Neufmaisons had been occupied,, Troop "B" sent patrols to Pexonne where they made contact with the French 2nd DB. At dusk, the Troops received a few rounds of flat trajectory fire at Neufmaisons.

The Air OP was active today but the planes had a difficult time because of the AA fire and the enemy planes.

One plane had received two holes from the AA fire in the last three days and then "cracked up" on take-off and is now in for repairs.

November 19, 1944 - Troop "B" moved into Pexonne while Troop "A" remained in Neufmaisons with the 100th Recon. Troop. Light patrols were sent out to the east from both towns. Troop "C" was ordered to relieve elements of the French 2nd DB at Badonviller. Troop "E" had several fire missions. Their guns destroyed a howitzer, forced the enemy to withdraw from prepared positions and put harassing fire on enemy who were entrenched in the path of the Troops.

Troop "B" patrols ascertained that the enemy had a SP gun, machine guns and a tank in the edge of the woods east of Pexonne. Troop "E" Artillery forced these to withdraw. Troop "A" patrols were routine.

1st Sgt. Merber, Sgt. Newton and Tec5 Allbright, Troop" A" and Tec5 Scruggs, Troop "B" were awarded the bronze star Medal for Heroism in Action. The awards were made at Corps Headquarters by General Brook, Commander of VI Corp.

November 20, 1944 - Troop "A" moved from Neufmaisons to Fenneviller. Troop "B" continued to operate out of Pexonne. Troop "C" consolidated its positions at Badonviller. Troop "E" was inactive and company "F" continued support to the Reconnaissance Troops.

Company "F" was ordered to detail three light tanks to assist the 399th Infantry to reduce an enemy strong point on hill 467 in the thick woods north of Raon L'Etape.

The tanks successfully completed their task, but then came under fire of a Mark IV which was in position on a nearby ridge. LT. Beck, who was in command of the tanks, ordered the section to withdraw and exposed himself in order to better direct the withdrawal. As the tanks left the area, Lt. Beck, whose tank was the last to leave the area, was killed by an enemy machine gunner. Lt. Beck was taken to the clearing station and on the way one of the other tanks developed engine trouble., The remaining tank was ordered back to the assistance of the Infantry. Upon reaching their objective, the tank came under the fire of the Mark IV for the second time.

The second round fired by the enemy hit close to the tank and shrapnel struck the driver rendering him unconscious. The driver, Tec4 Vaughn regained consciousness long enough to drive the tank out of danger and then passed out again.

Troop "A" sent out patrols shortly after reaching Fenneviller and these drew artillery fire from the enemy. Pvt. Compton and Pvt. Romero were LWA by shrapnel from this artillery. Troop "B" patrols detected two enemy tanks at the edge of the woods east of Pexonne. Friendly aircraft strafed and dive-bombed them and they were driven back.

Captain Egbert, Commanding Officer, troop "E" was awarded a Bronze Star Medal for Heroism in Action. The Medal was Awarded per Sec IV, GO 42, HQ, VI Corps, dated 4, November 1944.

Troop "A" with two platoons at Neufmaisons and one at Fenneviller had a busy and difficult day. At 0845 hours the 1st and 3rd platoons moved to Neufmaisons and the 2nd platoon remained at Fenneviller, which they out-posted. The 2nd platoon directed fire from "E" Troop and the 69th AFA on enemy tanks and personnel in the woods around Fenneviller. The enemy was forced to withdraw under this artillery fire. At 1445 hours the 2nd platoon was relieved by Troop "B" and moved to Neufmaisons.

Troop "B" outposted Pexonne and sent aggressive patrols to the south and southeast. Troop "C" outposted Badonviller and pushed patrols to the southeast removing two road-blocks. A Troop "C" patrol engaged the enemy in a fire- fight. The enemy force withdrew after a short fight. Troop "C" Mortar Squad delivered fire on an enemy vehicle believed to be a Mark IV tank and caused it to withdraw. The enemy shelled the Badonviller area with approximately 250 rounds of artillery and mortar fire. Company "F" reinforced the Reconnaissance Troops.

At 1815 hours a half track which was returning with men from the Squadron Rest Center to Troop "A", made a wrong turn and exploded a mine near Vacqueville. In the resultant explosion, Tec5 Jaconno and Tec5 Curry were killed, S/Sgt Kelly and Cpl. Lumley were SWA and hospitalized. Tec5 McCain and Pfc. Hawn, Troop "C" were LWA by artillery fire at 1330 hours and were hospitalized. Sgt. Foster, Tec5 Luckenbill and Pvt. Hebert were LWA by the same artillery fire and remained on duty.

Sgt. Driscoll, Company "F", was awarded the Silver Star for Gallantry in Action. The award was presented per Sec. I, GO 42, HQ, VI Corps, dated 4 November 1944. Sgt. Rezonico, Company "F", was awarded the Bronze Star for Heroism in Action. The award was presented per SEC I, GO 41, HQ, VI corps, dated 30 October 1944.

Sgt. Fisher was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the Cavalry PAC a telegram from the 7th Army.

November 23, 1944 - All Troops are operating from the same positions. Troop "A" directed "the fire of E" Troop guns on enemy tanks and personnel in the woods and occupied the positions when the enemy withdrew. Troop "A" maintained contact with Co "G" 398th Infantry. Troop "B" sent out dismounted patrols which contacted the 14th Armored Division at St. Guirin. Company "F" reinforced the operations of the reconnaissance Troops.

Thanksgiving Dinner was served to all the Troops and the meals were reported to be a success.

Eight POWs were taken, five of whom, were carrying the "Safe-Conduct" passes that the Squadron had caused to have fired over the line yesterday.

November 24, 1944 - Troop "B" took Celles-sur-Plaine after removing two roadblocks that protected the town. Troops "A" & "C" passed through the town and pushed to the northeast while "B" Troop out-posted the town.

"A" & "C", Troops with supporting tanks, reached Raon-sur-Plaine, They pushed through and started forward until they encountered a roadblock 1/2 miles out of town.

The Engineers removed the block and shortly after noon we pushed on to Schirmeck.

Schirmeck was the objective of Combat Command "A" from the north, the 100th division from the southeast and the 3rd Division from the southeast. All units reached their objective today and the result was a traffic jam of amazing proportions.

(Editorial comment) Schirmeck was the location of a large Concentration Camp. With the arrival of US troops, the inmates were, of course, all set free and roamed happily all over the place. The ones I saw appeared to have been forced labor types. They seemed to be in better physical condition than those held in the "Death Camps" though that may not have been true of all who had been held there.)

Lt. Fisher, "F" Company was awarded the Bronze Star per Gen. Order 69, HQ , 7th army, dated 30 August 1944. The Medal was awarded at VI Corps Headquarters, Epinal, France.

November 26, 1944 - Troops "A" and "C" assembled in Schirmeck Troop "B" was held in Squadron reserve at Raon-sur-Plaine. It was expected that a halt of at least one day would be given at this point. The tanks of "F" Company were assembled at Grande Fontaine and all of the troops started performing motor maintenance. Colonel Hodge received orders at VI Corps Headquarters relieving the Squadron of attachment to the 100th Division and attaching it to the 3rd Division.. Troops "A" and "C" were ordered out on a new mission, which would be allotted them when they met Col. Hodge in Mulbach. Troops "B" and "E", Company "F" and Headquarters Troop were ordered to move to Mulbach at 1730 hours. The Squadron CP was established in Mulbach shortly after "B" Troop arrived there. The mission of the Squadron is to push aggressive reconnaissance east and secure the left flank of the 3rd Division whose mission is to hold Strassbourg.

Troops were ordered to reconnoiter east from Wasselheim with troop "C" on the north and troop "A" on the south with Troop "B" closely following Troop "A". The Troops moved out to Wasselheim and arrived about midnight.

(Comment from Col. Samsel's book: The attack on Strasbourg, the Capitol of Alsace-Lorraine, was launched on the 27th along with the French 2nd Armored Division who advanced recklessly at great speed and quickly overran the German outposts. The German defenders were completely surprised by the audacity of our aggressive attack and fell back across the Rhine River completely disorganized. The city was in Allied hands by evening and Germans were surrendering in small groups in a bewildered state. (The Squadron's role from the daily Reports follows).

November 27, 1944 - A platoon of tanks from Company "F" was attached to each of the Reconnaissance Troops and at dawn they moved out on their mission. The Squadron moved to Strasbourg without trouble or contact with the enemy. From there the troops moved on and Troop "A" had a great deal of difficulty because most of their area was flooded. Troop "C" secured their defense line without trouble. Troop "B" was in Squadron reserve and Troop "E" supported the Reconnaissance Troops.

Air (flying) conditions seemed to be very good and Captain Wassel, The Squadron Air Observer, went up. Around noon a very heavy fog settled in the Squadron's area and Wassel who was trying to contact our Reconnaissance Column on the road was blinded. He immediately radioed the other plane to turn back but received no answer. When Captain Wassel finally found an opening in the fog, he was over the Rhine River. Turning back, he ran low on fuel and decided to attempt a landing. Hampered by the fog, he hit the side of a hill, damaging the landing gear, but neither the pilot nor Captain Wassel was injured. It was later determined that the other plane was in enemy hands.

Sgt. Wigand, Company "F" was awarded the Bronze Star Medal: PAC Sec. I. GO 47, HQ, VI corps.

November 28, 1944 - Troop "A" worked their way through the flooded area and occupied an outpost line north of Strasbourg along the Rhine River. Troop "B" sent patrols to the north and northeast and operated a patrol around Schlitigheim. Troop "C" shifted their outposts slightly. Troop "E" had no fire missions. Company "F" supported the reconnaissance Troops. After three days of organizing the defense of the city, the Squadron attacked north along the Rhine. (See map pg. 40A - Area of operations Nov. 28, 1944 - Dec 21<sup>st</sup>).

One of the "B " Troop patrols engaged the enemy on the outskirts of Gambsheim. After a sharp fight during which five SS Troopers, are known to have been killed and one SS man captured; the enemy withdrew and the patrol continued its mission. All of our men came out of the fight without injury although their equipment had bullet and shrapnel holes in it.

In the afternoon, Troop "B" was ordered to occupy Kilstett and Troop "C" to occupy Hoerd. Troop "A's" mission remained the same, to patrol to Robertsau, a suburb of Strassbourg. Both Troops occupied their assigned towns. LT. Middlebrook, Troop "B" was wounded by sniper fire in the course of the patrols, but remained on duty.

Captain Bush was detailed in command of a small force that was to attempt to occupy Gambsheim in the morning. The force consisted of 7 light tanks from Company "F", 3 TDs from the 702<sup>nd</sup> (?) Tank Destroyer Bn, and one Reconnaissance platoon from Troop "C". Captain Bush is to attempt to take the town from the west while "B" Troop forces made aggressive reconnaissance from the south. All roads to the town have been reported mined by the FFI. The orders are to take the town if possible, but not at all costs.

November 29, 1944 - The Squadron pushed north from Kilstett and east from Weyersheim toward Gambsheim.

Troop "B" advanced north from Kilstett with a mounted platoon and a dismounted platoon. Captain Bush advanced with his task force, east from Weyersheim. The "B" Troop platoons received heavy fire upon reaching the outskirts of the town and two men, Cpl. Tankowitz and Tec5 James Robertson were SWA and hospitalized. One armored car was lost and the force withdrew under heavy 75mm AT, mortar, bazooka and small arms fire. Captain Bush's force pushed to the edge of the town without receiving fire and then AT guns, mortars, bazookas, rifle grenades and small arms fire opened up on them from both sides. The force withdrew after killing 12 of the enemy without personnel loss to itself. One light tank had to be towed back but need only minor repairs to put it back on the road. a battery of 19th FA Bn gave the forces excellent support throughout the day's operations.

November 30, 1944 - Troop "A" is patrolling along the Rhine. Troop "B" outposted La Wantzenau and Kilstett and laid interditory fire and harassing fire on Gambsheim. Troop "C" has been patrolling to the west of Strassbourg in a search for enemy stragglers.

German patrols have been crossing the Rhine in rubber boats and operating in our area. Troop "A" has spotted a place that they think the enemy has used for landing and are going to try to catch them in the water.

#### NOVEMBER SUMMARY

The first part of November was a dragging difficult time for the Squadron. Patrols were active; mounted when possible; dismounted when conditions forbade the use of vehicles. On the 25th of the month, the breakthrough came, and the Squadron was off in hot pursuit of the outsmarted enemy.

We moved on to Strassbourg and then on to the banks of the Rhine where the end of the month found us trying to clear up pockets of enemy or soften him for another blow.

The strength of the Squadron on the 30th of November was 40 Officers and 688 Enlisted men.

(For some reason we have no Daily Reports for the 117th from the end of November through the 30th of December. The Squadron Daily Report record of events resumes in January, which includes actions on December 31st 1944 at Bitche.)

In his Book, Col. Samsel comments on this period as follows:

Gambenheim was finally occupied on December 8th with assistance from a 3rd Division Infantry Battalion. On December 10th, the Squadron was attached to the 79th Division, which attacked north along the Rhine using the 117th on the right flank adjacent to the river. After hard fighting, we occupied Bischweiler and then Seltz, about 24 miles north. The objective on December 15th was Lauterbourg, our first town on German soil. Lt. Bertoldi with his Platoon from "C" Troop engaged the enemy for the first time on his own soil and took the town on the 16th. On that day, the Squadron was relieved for a short rest. Elements of the 70th Division took over. At this point, the Squadron was operating farther east than any other Allied Troops on the entire western front. The only barrier between Germany and us was the Rhine River.)

On December 18th, 1st LT. Harry E. Roedler, Staff Sgt. Vincent C. Panzino, Staff Sgt. Edward Torbich, Sgt Ernest Haley and Sgt. Henry E. Deaton were killed when the Bantam in which they were riding ran over a stack of buried Teller mines. 2nd Lt. Carl G. Ellison was seriously wounded and later died from wounds received in the same explosion.

On December 21st the Squadron was attached to the 14th Armored Division and assigned to the Hudelson Task Force, commanded by Col. D. H. Hudelson. A copy of "Hudelson Task Force, 21 December - 2 January" prepared for the files of the 14th Armored division is included with the 117th Daily Reports for the month of December. It is the only archival record we have of that period.

The following are a few facts excerpted from the Hudelson Report.

The report begins with by telling about the 7th Army, responding to orders to extend its boundaries and assume the defensive along a 84 mile front from the Rhine River to the vicinity of Sarrbrucken to facilitate the Third Army's regrouping for operations against Von Rundstedt's Ardennes salient. Those instructions came to the 7th Army officially in the form of a 6th army Group letter dated 21, December 1944 which emphasized that the Group would be prepared to yield ground rather than endanger the integrity of its forces. The XV Corps comprised the left flank of the 7th army, the VI Corps was positioned on the right.

The Hudelson Task Force was positioned on the VI Corps left flank, holding a front of about ten miles in the lower Voges/Hardt mountains area. It consisted of: Combat Command Reserve, 14th Armored Div. less one tank Battalion; Co. "B", 645th Tank Destroyer Battalion; Co B, 83rd Chemical Mortar Battalion; Co "A" 125th Armored Engineer Battalion; 1-540 Combat Engineers. 94th Cavalry Sqdn, 62nd Armored Infantry Battalion and the 117th Cavalry Recon Sqdn. The 94th was attached to the 117th.

The 62nd AIB was placed on the right of the sector, the 117th Cavalry Squadron on the left, and the 94th Cavalry Squadron in the center. The 1st Battalion of the 540th Engineers was given the mission of maintaining all roads and bridges in the sector and assuming the role of reserve for the Task Force, The 500th AFA Battalion supported the Task Force. The Colonel makes a point of the fact that "due to the extremely large front it was difficult to organize a continuous defensive line or to give sufficient depth to the defense.

He further stated that the character of the terrain was such that a continuous line of defense was difficult to establish and the Troops were ordered to establish strong points. In dense mountainous forest, this obviously permitted considerable opportunity for unobserved infiltration! His report includes very little about the 117th. Most of the combat action reported deals with that in the area of the 62nd Armored Infantry Battalion which held the right flank of the Task Force positions.

#### 117th Cavalry Squadron's participation in the Hudelson Task Force

(From Col. Samsel's "After Action Report" and other commentaries on this period in Chapter VIII of his Book)

Colonel Samsel notes that with the 94th Recon. attached, we were ordered to take up defensive positions in the heavily wooded area of the Upper Vogues Mountains, to the south and southeast of the town of Bitche. The 117th was directed to relieve the 106th Cavalry Group who were holding positions there. That order was implemented on December 23rd. The positions we took over were considered well prepared with considerable quantities of concertina wire and heavily mined areas to their front. (Editorial comment: We were pleased with that until the third platoon sergeant asked for maps of the mine fields they had laid in front of the "C" Troop Sector. They informed us that they had not prepared any and left! That was a complication we didn't need!)

The ten- mile defensive line held by the Task Force was indeed sparsely covered (see map). Two troops each of the 117th and the 94th Recon were committed to front line positions. "B" and "C" Troops of the 117th were on the left flank. "B" Troop on the left at the head of a lake. They maintained contact with elements of the 100th Division's 199th Infantry Regiment on their left. Each Troop had five light tanks attached. On "C" Troop's right flank, "B" and "D" Troops of the 94th Recon held the center of the Task Force Sector. The 62nd Armored Infantry Battalion defended the right flank of the sector.

In support were the 500th Armored Field Artillery, "A" company 125th Engineers, a Platoon of the 645th Tank Destroyer Battalion and Co. "B" of the 83rd Chemical Mortar Battalion.

The January 1945 Squadron Daily Reports define the positions held by the Task Force as outlined below. (See map pg. 42A, for operations from Dec 31, 1944 - Mar 29, 1945. Maps 42 B, C & D detail The Hudelson Task Force Defense period. and the German New Years Offensive at Bitche.)

"B" Troop, 117th, on the left, extended from Q779-488 to Q785-490 to Q788-403. They maintained contact, on their left with elements of the 100th Division's 399th Infantry and on their right with "C" Troop, 117th. "C" Troop positions extended from Q 788-483 to Q796-475 to Q800-483 and they maintained contact with Troop "D", 94th Cav. Recon. whose positions ran from Q800-483 to Q803-475 to Q808-470 to Q810-471. They in turn maintained contact, on their right, with "B" Troop of the 94th. "B" Troop's positions extended from Q809-469 to Q805-460 to Q 812-455, On their right, "B" Troop was in contact with elements of the 62nd Armored Infantry Battalion.

Co "F", 117th had 10 light tanks attached to Troop "B" in defensive positions in the vicinity of the lake, Q785-490. Five light tanks were attached to "C" Troop to reinforce the "C" Troop line. The balance of CO. "F" was in reserve at Mouterhouse, Q795-425.

Troop "E" artillery firing positions were set up in the vicinity of Q783-431, in general support of all elements of the Squadron.

"A" Troop of the 117th was attached to the 62nd Armored Infantry for operations only. in the vicinity of Q 882-414.

The 500th Armored Field Artillery, set up to support all elements of the task Force, was in Barenthal, Q84 - 42. (questionable grid ID) Elements of the 1st Battalion, 540th Engineer Regiment, in Task Force reserve, were available to the 117th on call. Attached units were Co. "A" 125th Engineers, one platoon of Co. "B", 645th TD Bn, and one platoon of Co. "B" 83rd Chemical Weapons Bn.

The Command Posts of both Squadrons were set up in Mouterhouse. "A" Troop of the 117th, initially in reserve at the Squadron Command Post, was attached to the 62nd Armored Infantry Battalion on December 28th.

Enemy patrols operated each night in the sectors of both Squadrons. On one occasion, in the early morning hours of December 29th, an enemy patrol of one officer and four men cut through the wire defenses of the 3rd Platoon Troop "B" of the 117th and attacked the platoon CP. They killed the sentry, wounded three others and captured the Platoon Leader Lt. Steven Middlebrook.

(Unless otherwise indicated, what follows is again drawn from the Squadron Daily reports starting with January 1, 1945)

During the afternoon of December 31st, Major Samsel, inspected the "B" Troop defenses with Col. Meyers, CO of the 62nd Armored Infantry who were to relieve the Squadron on January 4th. At the time, Capt Barnaby, "B" Troop's CO was supervising improvement of defensive positions in his sector. Connecting trenches between positions were deepened, additional concertina wire was being laid and all positions being strengthened as much as possible. All automatic weapons had been dug in, tanks were in hull defilade positions and both radio and telephone communications were superbly tied in so that positions could communicate with each other and the CP as they desired. Both Col. Samsel and Col. Meyers were well impressed and satisfied with the organization of the defenses in this area.

Early in the evening of December 31st 1944, VIth Corps issued orders to all Troops that there was to be no celebrating or drinking of any intoxicating beverages: Troops were to be especially alert! This seemed hardly necessary because forward positions had been previously probed often enough to cause us to realize the absolute need to remain alert at all times.

During the early evening of December 31st, reports indicated that the entire Squadron sector was quiet. At 2310, the 1st platoon of Troop "B", 117th Cavalry, reported very heavy traffic on the road running due east from Bitche. There followed similar reports from all platoons along our front during the next thirty minutes. Artillery was placed on pre-arranged concentrations along this road.

#### JANUARY 1945

A few moments after midnight, Capt. Barnaby, CO of "B" Troop, 117th reported that the outpost of the 399th Infantry at Q776-492 was surrounded by an estimated 60 enemy. Telephone contact with the outpost was, however, still maintained. This information was given to the 399th Regiment who advised they would send reinforcements to relieve the situation. Almost at the same time, the 3rd platoon of "B" Troop, 117th Cavalry reported that enemy were attacking their positions from the left and rear. Shortly thereafter, the 1st and 2nd platoons reported heavy enemy attacks and fierce fire-fights in their sector. By 0100, 1 January 1945, all platoons of Troop "C" 117th reported that they were being engaged by the enemy. This was followed by similar reports from "D" Troop, 94th Cavalry on our right.

S/Sgt Sherman in command of the 117th's "B" Troop 2nd platoon directed artillery fire to within 75 yards of his positions and stopped the initial attack.

By 0300, it became apparent that the enemy was attacking in strength and Col. Hodge asked the Hudson Task Force for "A" Troop of the 117th to be sent for support. He was informed that "A" Troop was already committed in the 62nd Armored Infantry sector. He then requested Company "A", 125th Engineers for support They had been in reserve. Again he was informed that this company was committed on the left of the 62nd AIF Bn. A final request was made for a Company of the 540th Engineers. Permission was given to commit "B" Company of that unit.

Intense firefights continued in all sectors of the 117th and in the "D" Troop area of the 94th. The main attacks appeared to be against "B" Troop of the 117th. The Platoon Leader of the 2nd platoon continued to call for artillery fire, which he directed to within 25 yards of his positions, inflicting severe losses on the Germans. All radio antennae were destroyed, eliminating radio communications, and it was later determined that one armored car had been hit and the tires on all platoon vehicles had been destroyed by his own fire.

At approximately 0330 Col. Hodge ordered "B" Troop's Captain Barnaby to have his platoons withdraw and if equipment could not be withdrawn, to destroy it if feasible. The Troop was to withdraw to a line Q772-463 east to Q797-468, and establish new positions.

At this time, Col. Hodge ordered Captain Zecca, The 117th' Squadron's Assist, S-3 to take the reserve, Company "B" of the 540th Engineers, and establish a defense line at the same coordinates he had given to Captain Barnaby. Captain Zecca was to be in Command of this defense area. He was to employ all the remaining elements of Troops "B" and "C" of the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, and also the Troops of the 94th Cavalry Recon. Squadron in protecting his right flank.

As "B" Troop of the 117th withdrew, the 3rd platoon covered the 1st platoon, which found it necessary to withdraw without their vehicles because the enemy infiltration into their positions made that impossible. Breechblocks were removed from some of the 37mm guns and the light automatic weapons were taken by members of the platoon. The 2nd platoon withdrew next, also with out their tire damaged vehicles, and the 3rd platoon followed with a platoon of light tanks covering their withdrawal.

It was necessary for each platoon to fight its way back against intense small arms fire from enemy who had already penetrated to their rear. The platoon of "F" Troop light tanks covering the withdrawal fired over 18,000 rounds of .30 cal. ammo in the course of that action.

Troop "C" of the 117th was given the order to withdraw to the new defense line shortly after Troop "B". It was reported that the 3rd platoon of Troop "C" had been overrun, receiving intense enemy small arms fire and infiltration which was heaviest on their left and center sectors. The 1st and 2nd platoons withdrew successfully retaining the majority of their equipment while the 3rd platoon lost all equipment and automatic weapons. The platoon of 4.2 mortars supporting Troops "C" and "D" , about to be overrun, found it necessary to destroy four mortars to prevent their capture.

At approximately 0430, word was received from "HTF" that the 19th Armored Infantry Battalion, less one Company, was being sent to support the 117th Cavalry Recon. Squadron.

Captain Zecca arrived at 0415, in the area where the new defense line was to be organized, and took command of the situation. Troop "B" was employed on the left of the line with Troop "C" on the right. Company "B", 540th Engineers was intermingled with both Troops. The platoon of Tank Destroyers from the 645th Tank destroyer Bn. was placed in position for close support. A new defensive line was organized to the right and left of the road at Q777-464 and Q782-464 at 0430A.

Two platoons of the 540th Engineers were initially employed, supported by the 2nd platoon of Troop "B" of the 117th. The remaining platoon of engineers was held in reserve 500 yards to the rear.



The enemy was less than 60 yards from these positions as our Troops moved into this line. It was estimated that the enemy force consisted of approximately 60 to 75 men supported with machine guns deployed in the draw at Q779-465.

Six light tanks of "F" Company of the 117th were set up at Q779-462. They covered the approaches leading to the crossroad.

Three Tank destroyers of the 645th Tank Destroyer Bn. were set in position at Q778-463 and Q779-462.

The enemy continued his infiltration tactics from the draw Q779-465, maintaining heavy small arms and machine gun fire against our defense.

At 0500, Captain Zecca realized that his force could not contain the enemy in the draw. He then established a defensive line on the high ground four hundred yards south of the cross-road Q779-462. The 1st and 2nd platoons of "C" Troop had withdrawn to this and the 3rd platoon of "B" Troop of the 117th had also arrived. All of them were immediately employed in the line.

In this new defense line, Captain Zecca improved his position and protected his only remaining route of withdrawal. Reports were received from "D" Troop of the 94th Cavalry Recon. Squadron, on the right of this defense line, that strong enemy pressure was being maintained against that position.

An enemy patrol of 15 to 20 men was observed infiltrating southwest down the draw at Q776-465. a strong combat patrol from Troop "C" was sent to observe and report the situation on the left flank where the patrol had been seen.

The enemy continued infiltrating aggressively toward this new position. Our troops engaged them with all available weapons and began to receive scattered rounds of mortar fire.

By 0700 the remaining personnel of "B" and "C" Troops had successfully withdrawn to the new defense positions and had been employed in the line.

At 0730 Captain Brown, S3, 117th Cavalry Recon. Squadron arrived at the forward positions of Captain Zecca, accompanied by the S2 of the 19th Armored Infantry Bn. and one platoon of the 19th Infantry.

Persistent attempts to infiltrate through our positions were continuously repulsed.

The balance of the 19th Armored Infantry Bn. under command of Major Green less one Company, closed in by 0930 at Q789-458. The 19th Infantry I & R platoon immediately reconnoitered the area for a line of departure, preparatory to launching an attack. The attack by the 19th was to be launched from a line at Q778-480 to Q784-461. Their mission was to clear out the enemy and restore the original lines maintained by the 117th Cavalry Recon Squadron. The remaining elements of "B" and "C" Troops of the 117th, and the light tanks of "F" Company would support this attack. It was planned that the 117th Cavalry elements would occupy the ground of intermediate objectives as the attack progressed.

Our Air OP reported at 1030 that approximately 60 to 80 enemy were observed moving southwest from Q772-462. It was believed their intent was to cut the withdrawal route of our forces.

Enemy pressure against our right flank became more aggressive.

Troop "D" of the 94<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Recon. Squadron, reported an enemy tank supported by approximately 30 to 40 dismounted men approaching from Stockbronn, Q811-479.

By noon, the situation was obscure on our left flank. No word was received from our patrol operating there. Heavy pressure was being exerted on our right flank with small arms and intermittent mortar fire on our immediate front.

Troop "D" of the 94th, on the right flank was withdrawing successfully under increasingly strong enemy pressure. It was apparent that the enemy intended to get behind us, cut our route of withdrawal and reduce our positions from the rear.

Troop "D" of the 94th reported an enemy tank and thirty men approaching from the vicinity of Q794-462, the immediate right flank of our position. One Tank Destroyer was dispatched by Captain Zecca and it engaged the enemy within 500 yards of his CP. The area was heavily wooded, and the enemy tank remained under cover.

At the Squadron Command Post in Mouterhouse, the situation was well in hand, with complete information of the situation along the entire sector of the "HFT". It was apparent that the right flank of the Task Force was falling back and reliable reports indicated that the enemy was holding the ground at Bannstein and controlled the road running southwest as far south as Q814-440.

The Squadron Command Post at Mouterhouse was under artillery fire and it was decided to move it one mile south from Mouterhouse. Upon arriving there at 0133, a report was received that Barental was under small arms fire and Col. Hudelson requested support.

When at 1400 1, January 1945, it appeared that the right flank of "HTF" was collapsing and the possibility of the road between Mouterhouse and Barental being cut, Lt. Col. Hodge issued the following orders: Troop "D" 94th Cavalry Recon. Sqdn. was ordered to Barental to support "HFT".

Troop "B" of the 94th was given the mission to keep open the road at Q819-427, for a possible withdrawal south toward Reipertswiller. Captain Zecca was ordered to withdraw to the main road running between Mouterhouse and Lemberg. Upon arriving there, the elements of "B" and "C" Troops were to delay toward Lemberg. The 19th Armored Infantry was to withdraw to Mouterhouse and to delay along the road from Mouterhouse to Sarriensberg. Q744-418.

Troops "B" and "D", 94th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron successfully disengaged with the enemy and withdrew to accomplish their new mission.. Arriving at Mouterhouse 1530, the leading elements of Troop "D" were fired upon by direct fire from what was thought to be an 88MM SP attempting to fight their way forward. They received small arms fire on the eastern outskirts of the town. A road block was then established at Q794-426 by Troop "D" to keep the road open running southeast from Mouterhouse west toward Sarreinsberg.

The remaining elements of Troops "B" and "D" of the 94th withdrew along the road from Mouterhouse west toward Lemberg.

In the meantime, Troop "C" followed by Troop "B" of the 117th withdrew west toward Lemberg. The 19th Infantry supported by 3 Tank Destroyers withdrew to Mouterhouse where they received heavy sniper fire. (In Col. Samsel's book, (then Sgt.) Robert D. Robbins of "B" Troop, tells of being bombed and strafed by four P-47 Thunderbolts of the 358th Fighter Group as they proceeded down the road toward Lemberg. (Your editor too can confirm that incident. Fortunately, the planes scored no hits though a bomb did hit on the roadside embankment directly over my head showering me with dirt and stones while machine guns bullets tore up the ground not a foot in front of my toes).

At 1700 the 19th Armored Infantry set up a line astride the road southwest of Mouterhouse, vicinity Q776-426 southeast to Q778-415.

When word was received that Barental and Mouterhouse was in enemy hands, it was decided to set up a line from Reipertswiller west to Sarreinsberg.

The 19th Infantry and Troop "C", 117th Cavalry were withdrawn to Sarreinsberg. Our Engineers had previously prepared two charges in the road between Mouterhouse and Sarreinsberg.

The Squadron Command Post was established at Wingen 1700P 1. January 1945. Lt. Col. Hodge and Captain Zecca reported to the Commanding General, 14th Armored division at Bouxwiller for instructions, since we were out of touch with the HTF". Lt. Col. Hodge called G3 of the VIth Corps to bring him up to date on the situation.

Col. Hodge ascertained the location of the "HTF" and reported at Reipertswiller approximately 1700 1, January 1945. Instructions were received from Col. Hudelson to hold the present line between Reipertswiller and Sarreinsberg. The line was established and held by elements of the 94th Cavalry Squadron, "C" Troop of the 117th Cavalry Squadron and the 19th Armored Infantry Battalion.

During all this time Troop "A" of the 117<sup>th</sup>, which was attached to the 62nd Armored Infantry Battalion near Bernstein, had had its troubles too. Ordered out of reserve from Phillipsburg to the vicinity of Bannstein, they had set up defensive positions when the attack first began. They were steadily forced back by a numerically superior enemy. Patrols operating between platoons were cut off. By 0600, Bannstein was in enemy hands. The 2nd platoon's route of withdrawal was cut by this occupation and it was necessary for them to run the gauntlet of fire in order to rejoin the Troop. Having run out of ammunition, they made a dash for it, and although some of the bantams were riddled and two men wounded, they made it.

The other platoons found themselves in a similar situation. The machine gun fire covering the road on which they had to withdraw was so heavy that they realized the bantams could not survive.

So the armored cars were loaded to capacity with the majority of the 1st platoon and took off at top speed. Although the lead car stopped a bazooka shell, the column got through safely.

The remainder of the 1st platoon and the 3rd platoon were reorganized under the command of Lt. D. Christian Gauss, 3rd Platoon Leader. Finding it impossible to evacuate his men in bantams, he led them cross-country, dismounted, sometimes having to wade through waist-deep streams. This group totaled 25 men. They arrived safely at Phillipsburg at 0730, with their ammunition exhausted. During the balance of the day, the Troop operated as infantry, filling in gaps between other units.

By the end of the day, "C" Troop of the 117th together with the 19th Armored Infantry Bn. was holding a line Sarreinsberg - Goetzenbruck. Company "F" with its few remaining tanks was maintaining a roadblock on the Sarreinsberg - Wingen road against any enemy penetration from the north. Troop "B" with its few remaining vehicles was operating road patrols from Wingen Q73-35 to Rosteig Q71-37. (? why 2 digit Grids in this paragraph?) Troop "E" firing positions were set up in Ingwiller Q81-30. Troop "D" of 94th Cavalry was maintaining positions in the vicinity of Wildenguth Q79-38, Reipertswiller Q73-36 - Ingwiller Q81-30

So endeth January 1, 1945 - but it was not yet the end of the German "*Operation Nordwind*". The Germans had attacked with 4 divisions; the 559th, 257h, 361st and 256th Volksgrenadiers.

-117th Cavalry Recon Squadron Daily reports continue-

2, January 1945 - Elements of the 179th Infantry Regiment arrived to support the Reipertswiller - Sarreinsberg line, and by 0800, the Commanding Officer, Col. Murphy, was appraised of the situation and employed his troops accordingly.

About 1500, Troop "A" was relieved of attachment to the 62nd Armored Infantry and reverted to control of the Squadron. Conservatively estimated, "A" Troop accounted for at least 150 enemy casualties, not taking into consideration casualties inflicted by unobserved mortar fire.

Later in the day, word was received from Task force Hudelson that this Squadron and the 94th Squadron were relieved. The 117<sup>th</sup>, less "C" Troop, which was still in position with the 19th Infantry, at Goetzenbruck, moved toward an assembly area.

During the first two days of the New Year, the Squadron inflicted at least 1000 casualties upon the enemy. In many cases, the men fired until their ammunition was exhausted or the barrels of their automatic weapons were burnt out. Our own casualties were one killed, 14 wounded and 25 missing.

3, January 1945 - The Squadron less "C" Troop, assembled in the vicinity of Ringendorf. "A" Troop and Squadron Headquarters remained in this village and prepared for refitting and extensive motor maintenance. Troop "E" moved to Bischwiller for a similar purpose. Company "F" and Troop "B" located in Altdorf and Issenhausen respectively.

"C" Troop remained in the vicinity of Goetzenbruck, assisting the 19th Armored Infantry Battalion in repulsing enemy attacks. At 1500, the Troop was attached to the 179th Infantry Regiment of the 45th Division. At 1800, an enemy infantry attack was made in considerable strength supported by 3 tanks. "C" Troop assisted in repulsing the assault. One tank was knocked out by artillery fire.

(Although it is not covered in the Squadron Daily Reports, "Those who were there will tell you that C" Troop, in the course of the above enemy attacks, was for a time, completely surrounded and cut off from any route of withdrawal, an advantage the enemy was unable to sustain").

Lt. Col. Hodge, who had been scheduled to leave for temporary duty in the United States, left today. Due to the critical situation, he had delayed his departure until the Squadron had been relieved. (The Colonel's departure dictated a change in Command but the Squadron Daily Reports provided no details).

(The following two paragraphs from Col. Samsel's Book discuss it briefly as follows:)

"Col. Hodge received a ninety-day leave of absence to return to the States. Officially, I assumed Command of the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mecz) at midnight January 1, 1945 per Special Order No. 1

"On January 3, 1945, the Colonel bade his Officers and men farewell and departed for the States." I sensed he would not return, and this was confirmed ten days later when a cablegram from the War Department advised of his assignment as an Instructor to the Cavalry School, Fort Riley, Kansas."

(With then Maj. Harold J. Samsel now in Command, we return to the Daily Reports of action.)

4, January 1945 - The disposition of the Squadron remained unchanged. Troops continued refitting and performing motor maintenance. Requisitions were prepared for vehicles and weapons lost in combat.

Troop "C" remained on the line with the 179th Infantry. Outposts were set up about the town of Meisenthal. Compare to the last few days, enemy activity was at a minimum. Some mortar and artillery fire was received and two casualties were sustained; Tec5 James Rogers and Pfc. Junior Lake.

5, January 1945 - The Squadron was still resting and refitting. No change in "C" Troop's positions. Mortar and artillery fire continue to harass them but without effect.

6, January 1945 - All troops with the exception of "C" remained in their assembly areas and continued refitting. Last night, for the first time in some months, The Squadron had an opportunity to see a motion picture, The film was furnished by VI Corps Special Service.

Troop "C" remained in defensive positions at Meisenthal. The situation was relatively quiet except for 60 rounds of artillery fire which fell on the positions. No contact with the enemy was reported.

7, January 1945 - The Squadron remained in the assembly areas. Troops "B" and "E" were given physical exams by the Squadron Surgeon. It was found that the most common complaint was ingrown hairs on the legs resulting from lack of opportunity to bathe often.

Troop "C" was released from attachment to the 179th Infantry at 1437 and reverted to Squadron control. The Troop withdrew from the defensive positions and was ordered, at 1820 to assemble at Asswiller,

Motion pictures were shown again at Headquarters Troop Mess Hall in Ringendorf.

The weather continued cold with occasional snow flurries.

8, January 1945 - Troops continued refitting. Physical examinations and dental inspections of "F" Company and the balance of "E" Troop were conducted. Movies were shown in the evening. Take it easy was the order of the day.

9, January 1945 - No change in disposition of the Squadron. Troops were afforded an opportunity to take showers at Hochfelden where a bath unit was operated by the 14th Armored Division. Replacements for clothing and personal equipment lost in combat were issued.

10, January 1945 - At 1500, Troops "A" and "B" commenced operating security road patrols. The towns included in "A" Troops itinerary were Bischwiller, Brumath, Hochfelden, and Hagenau. "B" Troop covered Niedermodern, Bouxwiller, Saverne, Wasselonne and Hochfelden. No enemy activity was reported in the vicinity of any of these places.

11, January 1945 - Troops "A" and "B" continued to run road patrols through the same areas. The rest of the Squadron carried on motor maintenance and general refitting. Movies were shown in the evening. The weather was poor: cold and cloudy with occasional snow flurries.

12, January 1945 - Road patrols were continued. With the exception of "C" Troop, all Troops and Medical Detachment heard the Articles of war and attended sex hygiene lectures.

A report of security measures taken to protect areas and installations in VI Corps was submitted by officers in charge of security patrols. The check up was made on the 10th, 11th, and 12th of January. Standard Operating Procedures for the destruction of vehicles and arms in the event of threatened capture, prepared by Captain Zecca, Squadron S3, were issued. Since, in most cases, vehicle destruction hinged on the employment of incendiary grenades, a large requisition was prepared for this item.

Vehicle replacements continued to come in. So far, Captain Crone, Squadron Motor Officer, has been able to secure 11 armored cars, 13 bantams and two light tanks. These vehicles are now at ordnance getting stripped for combat and having radios installed. The weather continues cold with intermittent snow flurries.

13, January 1945 - Troops "A" and "B" continued patrolling and checking security measures in their assigned areas. They found considerable laxity in areas not guarded by regular MP installations. The other Troops carried on with their maintenance and refitting programs.

Sent by the Seventh Army Historical Section, Captain Waters and Lt. Gieblitt reported to Major Samsel in preparation to writing up the details of the German attack on our positions below Bitché on January 1, 1945.

Captain William Nugent, Commanding Officer of Troop "C" was awarded a Bronze Star for his work as Troop Commander in the French Campaign. Coincidentally, "C" Troop held a party tonight to which members of the staff were invited. The weather is clear and cold.

14, January 1945 - At a Troop Commander's meeting this afternoon, it was generally agreed that the operating status of the Squadron equipment is satisfactory with the exception of the vehicle shortage. Seventh Army Historian, Captain Waters began work checking on individual Troop actions, working through the S3 reports .

Thirty-four replacements - now called reinforcements - arrived from the 3rd Replacement Battalion. These men embarked for this theater from the States on December 22, 1944. With them were Lt, Vincent DiLeo, Lt. Lloyd Moore and Lt. Joseph Richmond, all officers of this command who had been hospitalized. LTs. Did Leo and Richmond were assigned to "E" and "B" Troops respectively, and Lt. Moore went to Headquarters as Squadron Special Services Officer.

Because of the outstanding leadership they displayed in the Battle of Mouterhouse on the first of the year, six enlisted men were recommended to VI Corps for battlefield commissions. They are Staff Sergeants Harold Owen and Roy Mulcahey, Troop "A"; S/Sgt. Charles Sherman and Sgt. Charles Alworth, Troop "B"; Sgt Ben Emery and S/Sgt. Albert M. Robbins, Troop "C".

Although a search was made, no showers have been found available for the Squadron. The weather is clear and not so cold.

15, January 1945 - Lt. Marvin Carlile of "E" Troop reported to the 12th Air Force at Maricourt for temporary duty as an observer. This was in accordance with the plan to allow air force and ground personnel to switch jobs for a limited period so that they may better understand each other's problems.

Today, Troop "C" was assigned the following area to be covered by security patrols: Ettendorf, Niedermodern, Hagenau, Brumath, Trughtersheim, Kuttolsheim, Mommenheim Hochfelden, Willgottheim and Duntzenheim.

The amount and the quality of the food, plus the rest has had a marked effect in the appearance and the morale of the men. The weather is clear and cold.

16, January 1945 - Two Platoons from each Reconnaissance Troop are keeping up the patrols through the Corps area. With the exception of the vehicle shortage, the refitting program seems to be almost complete. Outstanding difficulty at present is getting winter recoil oil for the 37mm guns.

Permission to test fire the new weapons was granted by Corps today. A range was selected, and it has been decided that the firing will be done tomorrow and the following afternoon. The 37mm guns will have first priority.

Lt Daniel W. Lee and several NCOs, all of whom were wounded at Montrevel, returned to the Squadron today. Lt Lee was assigned to "C" Troop and Lt. Joseph Syms was switched to Headquarters as a Liaison Officer.

Captain Zecca and Major Brown visited VI Corps Headquarters to confer with G2 and G3 regarding future operations, which it is hoped, will coincide with our present security duties.

Motion pictures were shown again tonight. The weather remained clear and cold.

17, January 1945 - The security patrols set forth again in the morning, but were recalled when orders were received from G3, VI Corps at 0945 for all Troops to assemble and be prepared for a change of mission. An Assistant Corps G3, Captain Murray, turned up at Ringendorf to make a personal check of the Squadron's fitness for combat duty, i.e., vehicle and weapons status, personnel strength.

Major Brown proceeded to Seventh Army Headquarters to see Colonel Stevenson, and remained overnight. Bronze stars were awarded to Captains Nathan Fitz-Randoloh and Kenneth Barnaby, Commanders of Troops "A" and "B", respectively. Nine more bantams were received today.

The temporary duty in Paris opportunity has again been afforded the Squadron, and Lt Syms and four enlisted men were dispatched on this detail.

At 1400, "B" Troop, reinforced by one platoon each from "E" Troop "F" Company and "A" Troop was attached to Task Force Linden. They moved out to Souflenheim, with the mission of out-posting the town and operating the road patrols in the direction of Sessenheim during the hours of darkness. The balance of the Squadron remained on semi-alert in Ringendorf.

The messenger did not return with a film this evening so there were no movies. The weather remained cold with a light snowfall early in the evening.

18, January 1945 - The enemy reoccupied Sessenheim and "B" Troop elements were forced to withdraw from that area. Runtzenheim was out-posted and Souflenheim was patrolled. Some small arms fire was received at the former, and enemy artillery fell in the latter.

From the size and thickness of some of the shell fragments it is evident that some of the fire is of extremely heavy caliber; possibly from railway guns. Enemy activity has been of an aggressive deposition. No casualties were suffered by elements of the 117th.

The remainder of the Squadron, less "B" Troop reinforced, remained in assembly areas, checking details such as vehicular tool shortage and making pneumatic inspections. Lt. Phillip H. Laughlin was dispatched to Hagenau to act as Liaison Officer to Task Force Linden.

19, January 1945 - "Troop "B", reinforced, remained in position at Runtzenheim. There, they were in a position to observe a secondary tank attack made on enemy-held Sessenheim. Unfortunately, the enemy had a similar idea at the same time. The result was that two powerful armored forces clashed with considerable damage, but no decisive results. The remainder of the sector was relatively quiet. Major Samsel visited the "B" Troop positions.

The balance of the Squadron remained in their respective assembly areas until evening when the movies were interrupted by orders attaching us to the 36th Division. The Squadron immediately moved out, establishing its CP at Weitbruch with "A" Troop and "F" Company. Troops "C" and "E" moved to Weyersheim where they set up a defensive line running between Hoerd and Weyersheim. "E" Troop's assault guns were located on the rim of the line; in position for direct firing. "C" Troop also operated light patrols to Bischwiller and maintained contact with the French First Army on the right flank. Lt Edward B. Schutze was sent to the 36th Division in the capacity of Liaison Officer

The weather was cold with intermittent snow flurries that approached blizzard intensity about 2330.

20, January 1945 - The Squadron sector was not too active. The CP remained in Weitbruch. Troop "A" operated patrols between Bischwiller and Weyersheim with two sections from reconnaissance platoons. There was little activity on the line manned by "C" and "E" Troops.

Some enemy tanks were observed briefly two kilometers from their positions, but no activity of an offensive nature was noticed. Action in the "B" Troop sector was limited to patrol clashes and artillery exchanges. There was more counter-battery fire in this vicinity than usual.

Lt Edward Lilley, with five enlisted men, left for a 60 hour pass in Paris. The weather was very cold was very cold and snow fell almost continuously.

21, January 1945 - Troop "C", now reinforced with one platoon from "A" Troop, and "E" Troop held their Hoerd-Weyersheim line. All unnecessary vehicles were withdrawn from the area. In all parts of the sector but this one, things were extremely active. Adjacent units captured over 150 prisoners, inflicted many casualties and knocked out 6 Mark V and Mark VI tanks.

"B" Troop, with its supporting platoons was relieved from attachment to Task force Linden at 1000 and reverted to Squadron control. They assembled at Mommenheim and waited there for orders to rejoin. Squadron CP and "F" Company moved to Stephansfeld, a small suburb immediately below Brumath Troop "A" continued to operate its patrols through Bischwiller, Kurtzenhouse and Weyersheim after moving its CP to Bischwiller. Lt, Laughlin was relieved from duties as Liaison Officer with Task force Linden.

Captains Franklin D. Bush and James I. Fitz-Patrick, commanding "F" Company and Headquarters Troop respectively were awarded the Bronze Star Medal.

The weather continued cold and snowing.

22, January 1945 - Approximately 25 enemy tanks were observed in and around the woods near Gamsheim, northeast of "C" Troop's positions. Air Force dive-bombing and strafing accounted for several and dispersed the remainder. In Kilstett, the town below Gamsheim, a French Battalion was cut off and surrounded by the enemy. They were rescued, by another French Battalion, supported by ten medium tanks. 300 Germans prisoners were taken.

Captain Barnaby, "B" Troop Commander, made a daylight reconnaissance of "C" Troop's positions for relieving them, tonight. Major Samsel also visited "C" Troop. Lt Laughlin replaced Lt. Schutze as Liaison Officer with the 143rd Infantry Regiment. The Squadron was attached to the 142nd Regiment, which relieved the 143rd, and Lt. Laughlin shifted to the 142nd CP. The Squadron was visited by the Chief of Staff of the 36th Division.

As an experiment in winter camouflage, Troop "A" painted one bantam white, and "F" Company did the same thing with one light tank.

Two new Officers, 1st Lt. Frederick F. Leustig and 2nd Lt. Wilbur G. Maves were assigned to Troop "C" and Troop "A" respectively. "B" Troop relieved Troop "C" on the line at 2000. Troop "E" stayed put. As has become usual, many different colored flares were observed over enemy positions after nightfall.

23, January 1945 - Troop "B" remained in position on the Hoerd-Weyersheim line. The Squadron was relieved from attachment to the 142nd Infantry Regiment and reattached to the 143rd. Some artillery fire was received on our positions. Troop "A" continued to operate road patrols.

Major Samsel visited Troop "B" and the 143rd in the morning General Stack, the 36th Division's Chief of Staff visited the Squadron Cp and showed interest in our operational status, particularly in reference to vehicles and personnel. Colonel Adams of the Inspector General's Department of the VI Corps also made an appearance to gather a few more details of the withdrawal from the Bitche sector.

The weather was cold with intermittent snow flurries, which reached storm intensity after nightfall.



24, January 1945 - Major Samsel and Captain Zecca inspected "B" Troop positions on the line, and Captain Zecca checked in at the 143rd CP during the afternoon. The sector occupied by Troop "B" and Troop "E" remained fairly quiet with the exception of enemy light caliber artillery, which fell intermittently.

Troop "A" continued its road patrols. Company "F" commenced whitewashing all light tanks. A camouflage team from the Engineers is expected shortly to assist them.

Radio communications has been established with our rear echelon, which is now in Jetterswiller. The weather continues cold and snowing.

25, January 1945 - Major Samsel reported to General Dahlquist , CO of the 36th Division, for orders regarding a change in the Divisional Troop setup. With the exception of "B" Troop, two platoons of "E", and a platoon of "A" Troop, the Squadron is relieved from attachment to the 143rd Combat Team, and reverts to control of Division proper. The Reconnaissance Company of the 636th TD Bn and the 36th Reconnaissance Troop are attached to the Squadron. We are to continue to maintain the Hoerd-Weyersheim line, rotating the Troops there.

In addition, four primary missions have been planned, and the Squadron is to hold itself in readiness to do its part in executing any one of these. All commanders made reconnaissance of the terrain in their sectors, and detailed plans have been drawn up by S3.

Lt. Carlile returned from temporary duty with the Air Corps. He had flown on one bombing mission over Germany. Captain Schenk returned from the hospital.

Lt. Laughlin was relieved as Liaison Officer with the 143rd and Lt, Syms was appointed Liaison Officer with the 36th Division.

During the day the weather was cold and clear. In the evening a light snow fell.

26, January 1945 - Captain Zecca inspected "B" troop positions on the line. At 1800, "C" Troop moved up and relieved "B" Troop. Reserve elements of the Squadron continued reconnoitering the switch positions noted in the four operational plans drawn up by S3. Enemy activity during the day was limited to patrolling.

Major Samsel visited the VI Corps G1 Office.

Company "F" completed whitewashing their tanks. Tomorrow, "B" Troop will begin on their vehicles.

27, January 1945 - No change in disposition of the Troops. Major Samsel was appointed Officer in charge of the defense of the Brumath and Stephansfeld area, in the event of an enemy breakthrough. The sector had been broken down into four areas, each mutually supporting, and an elaborate warning and defense system has been prepared by S3.

No change in the weather, snow continued to fall.

28, January 1945 - Troop "C" remained on the line and reported no enemy activity in their area. Snow fell throughout the day and in some places drifted to a depth of almost two feet.

The Engineer camouflage team, who just completed whitewashing the tanks, have begun work on "B" Troop's vehicles. This treatment does not achieve the degree of whiteness that white paint would give, but it is believed that it will blend well with the snowy background, Also, in the event of a rapid thaw which would leave the ground bare, it would be comparatively easy to wash away.

Although no local church service was available, those personnel who were free managed to attend 36th Division services in Mommenheim.

29, January 1945 - A change of mission came through today. We are to hold a line in one area, while the 36th Division makes an attack close by.

Supporting units which will be attached to the Squadron for this job are: 36th Reconnaissance Troop, Co "B", 63rd TD Battalion (less one platoon), one platoon of Co "A" 763rd Medium Tank Battalion and the 59th Armored Field Artillery Battalion.

Major Samsel, Captain Zecca and Troop Commanders reconnoitered the line held by the 3rd Battalion of the 143rd Infantry, preparatory to taking over their positions tomorrow night. Later, Major Samsel and Captain Zecca reported to the 36th Division CP.

At 1800 the 36th Reconnaissance Troop relieved "Troop "C" on the Hoerdt - Weyersheim line. When the Squadron occupies the new position, we are relieved of responsibility for the defense of the Brumath - Stephansfeld area.

Two new Officers, fresh from the States were assigned today. They are 1st Lt. Robert P. Pfeifer and 1st Lt. David I. Nelson, and were assigned to "A" and "C" Troops respectively. An interrogation team for VI Corps was also assigned to the Squadron. Weather cool and clear.

30, January 1945 - Troop "B" began relief of the 143rd Regimental Combat Team, keeping contact with the 141st on the left. Troop "E" remained in dugout positions for direct fire support. Company "F" also had four tanks in defensive positions. Relief of the 3rd Battalion of the 143rd was complete at 2115.

Troop "A" operated road patrols after nightfall. One platoon was relieved from attachment to the 36th Reconnaissance troop and reverted to Squadron reserve. Troop "C" remained in Squadron reserve.

The enemy put on their usual many-colored flair display tonight. Other than that, there was no activity. Weather was cold and it snowed intermittently all day.

31, January 1945 - Troops "A", "B" and "E" stayed on the Weyersheim defensive line supported by "F" Company tanks. At 1700, Troop "C" was ordered from reserve. The new mission was to occupy Stainwald Forest, northeast of Gamsheim. A patrol from "C" Troop had ascertained that these woods, although thoroughly mined and booby-trapped, were cleared of all but a few enemy. They had also taken 13 prisoners. Those areas still held by the enemy were thoroughly treated with artillery. Major Brown visited VI Corps Headquarters.

A heavy thaw has begun. The snow has turned to rain, and that on the ground is melting fast. Some of the natives say that it is the end of the snow for the winter. In this low area, if the weather continues as it is, operating conditions will include floods and deep mud.

## FEBRUARY 1945

1, February 1945 - In order to attack Herrlisheim from the west and clear the enemy from the town and all the ground to the Rhine River, it is necessary to also clear the Stainwald Woods just north of Gamsheim to protect the south right flank of the attacking force. The Squadron holds the front east of Weyersheim and opposite Herrlisheim and Offendorf and it is planned that the 3rd Battalion RCT 141 will attack through the Squadron defense line.

Troop "C" reinforced by two platoons of the 36th Reconnaissance Troop and one platoon of light tanks was ordered to move in and occupy the Stainwald Woods. This was accomplished during the night.

Although no organized enemy resistance was met, the woods were heavily mined and booby-trapped. Two enemy machine gun positions were by-passed and flushed out during the occupation.

Defensive positions were set up on the northern and eastern edges of the woods and at 1200 the balance of the 36th Reconnaissance Troop moved to Gambsheim to reinforce the holding line.

Troop "C" prepared to operate a night patrol toward Offendorf.

Troops "A" and "B" held the defensive line east of Weyersheim without incident. Troop "E" moved up to Kilstett and set up its guns for support of all forward elements of the Squadron. CO "F" remained in support with two platoons in reserve.

The Squadron CP moved to Kilstett and maintained Headquarters there during the day.

2, February 1945 - Troop "C" and the 36th Reconnaissance Troop maintained their positions in the Stainwald Woods. Troops "A" and "B" occupied the area east of Weyersheim. A reconnaissance and raiding patrol was sent from Troop "C" toward Offendorf, supported by 12th Armored Division Artillery. The patrol, under Lt. Nelson, operated from 1200 to 1400 and obtained excellent information of enemy dispositions and strength, but was subjected to artillery fire as they advanced well dispersed across open fields.

Three enlisted men were wounded, one of whom died later. (T/5 Charles B. Shapiro succumbed to a wound caused by a shell fragment which pierced his helmet.)

The Troop "A" and "B" positions along the Canal are rapidly becoming untenable due to rising water as the thaw continues. The snow is disappearing rapidly and the ground is very soft and muddy. Should the Canal rise further, the entire area will be vacated as the flats will then be under water.

The enemy is stubbornly objecting to our approaches to Offendorf and Herrlisheim. He had abandoned Gambsheim to the French only after a very violent struggle, apparent in that not one house in the village remains in tact.

3, February 1945 - The front of the Squadron is gradually shifting from the Canal over to the Gambsheim area nearer the Rhine. Troop "B" pulled out of its positions and Troop "A" extended its line, thinly held, to cover a front of more than three kilometers. Troop "B" moved into Kilstett in Squadron reserve and Squadron Headquarters moved into the shambles that was once the village of Gambsheim.

Troop "B" sent a patrol to Offendorf which made contact with the enemy within 300 yards of Troop "C's" positions in the Stainwald Woods. One enlisted man was wounded in the ensuing firefight.

Troop "C" and one platoon of "F" Company harassed Offendorf with all weapons as a distractionary measure during the attack upon Herrlisheim by the 141st RCT. The enemy resisted strongly and after a long day of fighting, the 141st was obliged to withdraw to its LD by dark.

Our positions received harassing enemy artillery and mortar fire throughout the day.

Troop "E" fired many observed missions on the enemy vicinity of Offendorf, inflicting many casualties on personnel and knocking out two enemy tanks with direct hits.

4, February 1945 - Troop "A" was relieved of responsibility for the Weyersheim sector along the canal as the 143 RCT now occupies positions forward of that area from Rohrwiller to the south. Our Troops in the Stainwald Woods complete the protection to the front.

Troop "C" was relieved in its positions at 0800 by "A" Troop and assembled in Squadron reserve in Weyersheim with one platoon out-posting a line just east of Weyersheim - Hoerd. Troop "B" relieved the 36th Reconnaissance Troop positions at 1200 and the 36th Recon moved into 36th division reserve at Weyersheim. Troop "A" operated a patrol toward Offendorf, which reconnoitered road and ground conditions approaching the enemy held town.

5, February 1945 - Troops "A" and "B" occupied positions in the Stainwald Woods with one platoon of "F" Company in direct support. Troop "E" continued to support the forward elements of the Squadron. Troop "C" and the 36th Reconnaissance Troop remained in reserve.

A patrol operated toward Offendorf during the early morning hours met a determined and alert enemy. Enemy small arms and mortar fire prevented the patrols progress into the enemy lines

The enemy continues its tenacious hold on Offendorf and Herrlisheim despite the pressure placed on these towns.

Late in the period, a troop "B" patrol was able to reach the southern edges of Offendorf and made no enemy contact but found the road mined with AT mines.

6, February 1945 - Troop "B" reinforced by one platoon of Troop "D", 94th Recon. Squadron occupied Offendorf early in the period, and sent patrols north toward Herrlisheim.

Herrlisheim was occupied later in the period by elements of the 143 RCT. The enemy had abandoned both towns without further struggle after having defended them hotly for several days.

One platoon of the 753rd Medium Tank Battalion moved into Offendorf in support of Troop "B". Patrols were sent east to the Rhine to reconnoiter for the enemy. The area east of the river was found clear.

Elements of the 143 RCT relieved our forces in Offendorf at 1600. Troop "A" was relieved late in the period.

The Squadron assembled in the vicinity of Weyersheim in Division reserve. Troop "E" remained in the vicinity of Kilstett in firing positions; on call.

7, February 1945 - The Squadron remained assembled in Division reserve in the vicinity of Weyersheim. The S3 and Troop Commanders reconnoitered positions occupied by elements of the 141 RCT in the vicinity of Hagenau. The Squadron will relieve them tomorrow night. Troops are in the process of performing motor maintenance.

8, February 1945 - Troops continued motor maintenance during the morning and early afternoon. At 1500 hours, troops commenced movement to an assembly area in the vicinity of Hagenau and Marienthal. The Sqdn CP moved to Marienthal. At 1500 hours. Troop "A", reinforced with five light tanks from Company "F", occupied positions on the left of the Squadron line. The 36th Recon, Troop occupied positions in the center of the line and Troop "C" reinforced with five light tanks from Company "F" occupied positions on the right. Troop "B" assembled in reserve, backing up the left flank of the Squadron line and the Recon. Co. of the 636 TD Battalion assembled in the rear backing up the right side. The relief was completed without incident at 2115 hours.

9, February 1945 - Elements of the Squadron continued to occupy positions on the south side of the Moder River. Scattered rounds of heavy caliber enemy artillery fire fell in the vicinity of our forward positions. The men were all well dug in, and no casualties were suffered. During the hours of darkness, the enemy was very active with flares. They have also been quite actively probing the positions of the unit on our right flank.

Colonel Coolidge, Observer from the Army Ground Forces visited the CP in search of information on lessons learned in combat. The rainy weather was turning the Moder River into a sizeable obstacle with the water overflowing the banks and the current picking up speed daily.

10, February 1945 - The Squadron sector remained exceptionally quiet during the period and hardly any enemy movement was observed to our front. The weather remained mild with intermittent clouds. We had patrols operating north of the Moder river, in search of a POW without success. The enemy is very sensitive to our movement on the north side of the river.

11, February 1945 - Our positions along the south side of the Moder River were maintained without incident during the period. Troop "B" conceived and executed a detailed platoon sized raid for the capture of a POW on the north side of the river, accomplishing their mission without firing a shot.

12, February 1945 - Elements of the Squadron remained in position revising and improving their defensive line. No changes were made in the troop disposition and the enemy remained quiet during the daylight hours with only scattered enemy artillery falling in our sector. The enemy fired approximately 20 rounds of flat trajectory fire into Kaltenhouse early in the afternoon.

13, February - The 36th Reconnaissance Troop was relieved in position by the 636th TD Recon Co.. The change took less than two hours to complete and was accomplished without event. The enemy attitude remains defensive and quiet. During daylight hours the enemy intermittently shelled our front line positions and also shelled the Squadron CP area.

Troop "B" made a daylight reconnaissance along the river for possible crossings. No crossings were possible because of flood conditions.

14, February 1945 - Today has been a very quiet day. The enemy remains passive, throwing very little artillery. Few targets were observed by our outposts and Forward Observers for our artillery and mortars. It was impossible to cross the river to make patrols because of the high water. The entire period passed with no event. Troop "B" relieved Troop "C" in position on the line at 1800 hours.

15, February 1945 - The Squadron held the Moder River line between Hagenau and Bischwiller with Troop "A" on the left of the sector, 636th Recon Co. in the center and "B" Troop on the right. Troop "A" sighted and enemy tank across the river and directed artillery and TD fire on it. The tank was immobilized.

The 36th Reconnaissance Troop operated patrols toward enemy lines but the swiftness of the current and the width of the river at flood stage makes crossings almost impossible.

The enemy remained quiet. Scattered artillery was received during the day.

16, February 1945 - Troops "A" and "B" and the Recon Co. of the 636th TD Battalion hold defensive positions along the soggy southern bank of the greatly swollen and very swift river between the Alsatian towns of Hagenau and Bischwiller. Our positions are heavily armed with 50 caliber machine guns and 30 caliber light machine guns in each platoon position. Three platoons per troop man the line with two men on each gun during daylight and four per gun at night.

The 36th Reconnaissance Troop is attached to the Squadron and is in reserve along with our own Troop "C". Reliefs are effected every fourth day by rotating the Troops from reserve to the line positions. Tonight at 1815, just as darkness fell, the 36th Recon. Troop relieved Troop "A" in our left flank positions. They maintain liaison and physical contact with the 506th Parachute Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division located on the southeast outskirts of Hagenau.

Nightly patrols have been closely watching water levels and current speed of the Moder River and attempts to cross have been made every night. Our patrols succeeded in crossing on the nights of the 11th, 12th and 13th of February, taking one POW from the 457th Infantry Division. A patrol attempting to cross tonight to raid enemy positions was able to reach and island in the middle of the river, but very swift water in the main channel of the stream made the rubber boat unmanageable

Troop "E's" 105MM assault guns are engaged in firing observed missions in support of the Troops on the line.

Company "F" is held in reserve, ready to support any of the forward units.

17, February 1945 - The 36th Reconnaissance Troop, the Recon. Co. of the 636th TD Battalion and Troop "B" held the Moder River defense positions during the period.

The enemy is obviously anxious to maintain this sector as passively as our actions will allow. He becomes sensitive and reacts violently only when our patrols penetrate his defenses and take prisoners of war for identification purposes. POWs have stated their outpost positions are instructed not to fire on our patrols, but that they are to pull back to the Main Line of Resistance (MLR) and give the alarm when our patrols are observed.

Our outposts can hear horse and wagon movement each evening, assumedly carrying food to the enemy line positions. We are able to direct effective artillery fire to limit enemy movement.

Troop "B" observed an enemy self-propelled gun from their observation post and directed artillery fire which covered the target area very well.

Troop "C" operated a patrol across the river which reconnoitered the enemy outpost positions, drawing fire from an estimated seven or eight enemy riflemen. Artillery activity was light during the period.

Troops "A" and "C" in reserve, were able to accomplish much needed motor maintenance on their vehicles.

Troop "E" continued to support the forward elements of the Squadron.

Company "F" remained in alert reserve prepared to support any of the Troops on the line.

18, February 1945 - The Squadron continued to maintain the defensive line between Hagenau and Kaltenhouse, making contact with the 101st Airborne Div on the left flank and the 143rd Infantry of the 36th Division on the right. The 36th Recon, Troop, the Recon. Co. of the 636th TD Bn. and Troop "B" continue to hold the line positions. Troops "A" and "C", in reserve made good progress in cleaning up their vehicles. They took the opportunity to inspect all of their equipment, clean up their guns and catch up on shortages and salvage. Both Troops made patrols across the river; "C" Troop's 20 man patrol led by Lt. Lee, crossing at 1930 hours and "A" Troop's patrol, led by Lt. Leo Adams crossing at 2200 hours.

The "A" Troop patrol, equipped with signal flares and an SCR 300 for communication, penetrated the enemy lines and approached an enemy position from the rear where they made close contact and were forced to fight their way out, killing three enemy at close range with sub-machine gun fire and drawing enemy machine gun fire. The patrol continued on to penetrate further into the enemy area, becoming involved in a fire-fight as they attempted to approach a farmhouse situated one kilometer north of their point of crossing. As dawn was beginning to break, the patrol disengaged itself from the enemy and returned.

The Troop "C", patrol (as described in the Squadron Daily Reports), was deployed and attempting to cut its way through the enemy barbed wire when one enemy was observed pulling up the wooden stakes holding the wire in place, evidently to be used for fire wood. This enemy was taken prisoner and sent back to Squadron Headquarters. The patrol continued on, establishing listening posts, which reported the enemy locations and movement in the area. The patrol returned just before daylight.

(The true story of that patrol is described below by your editor who was the Patrol Leader. No officer participated.)

The Platoon Sergeant, was ordered to lead a combat patrol of 15 men across the Moder River. He was given 3 objectives: 1. To identify the location of enemy positions on the other side; 2. To bring back a prisoner; 3. To leave an observer behind enemy lines who would be picked up the following night.

The night was clear. The river crossing in rubber boats was uneventful. The area on the other side was farmland close to 200 yards wide between the river and the tree line near the road. Much of the ground was ploughed into furrows like a corn field with, of course, no crops growing. The enemy was throwing up occasional flares to light up the landscape. I decided first to try to locate the enemy positions.

They were not too difficult to spot. They talked and smoked with no apparent concern that they might be observed. We made note of their locations, and then considered where to go for a prisoner. I selected a position to our left near the river where we could utilize the cover of the furrows to approach the position; hopefully unobserved. I selected Sgt. Bill Foster and three men to accompany me, and left the other ten near the river crossing to form a base of fire, which was to cover our return should we get into trouble.

We crawled up the furrows in a line, abreast of each other. We froze in position, frequently, under the light of flares until they faded. In that way, we made our way up to a barbed wire fence about 100 to 150 feet in front of the enemy position. I was on the left, Sgt. Foster was on my right and the other three men to his right. The fence ran in front of Bill Foster and myself. To his right, it turned back toward the enemy. The other three men were not faced with the obstacle that faced Bill and me. We could hear the Germans talking up ahead, and we crawled under the fence. We inched our way toward their position, each man moving up when the guy on his left did so. I recall asking myself, am I really going through with this as again I moved forward. It was fortunate that I understood the German language for we were about 50 feet from them when one of the Germans, who had been talking, said that he was going to walk down the fence line. I had hardly signaled a stand fast when the man walked right into Bill and me. We stood, in a crouch, and I ordered him quietly (with a Thompson .45 SMG on his nose) to keep quiet, put his hands on his head and come with us.

We made it back under the barbed wire and the six of us headed quickly back to our firebase. A flurry of flares went up as we arrived there but they were too late to catch us. Now lying low, I pondered the balance of the mission. Frankly with a now alerted enemy and all of the flare activity that we had generated, it appeared very unlikely that we could sneak anyone through their lines. The attempt to do so would likely generate unnecessary casualties and furthermore, we had a prisoner that HQ was most anxious to get their hands on. I decided to abort the third part of the mission and returned with our prize. My failure to leave an observer behind enemy lines as directed was not applauded. Frankly, I didn't care. Some decisions, though they may be frowned upon by others, are best made by the guy out there doing the job.

Back to Squadron Daily reports

(Note: There are two more paragraphs in the Daily Reports concerning "A" and "C" Troop's patrols on this night. They are confusing in that only one patrol from each Troop had been identified for the date. Frankly the missions sound similar to those already described and as one who participated in the "C" Troop patrol, I wonder if the additional paragraphs are not just an elaboration on those reported above.

I could be wrong, and I can't speak for "A" Troop, but I have serious doubts that any other patrol from "C" Troop was out there. Possibly it was just a case of poor composition by the recorder of the events of that night.)

Troop "E" continued to support the forward elements of the Squadron with observed fire missions, and Company "F" remained in alert reserve.

19, February 1945 - No change was made today in the Troop's holding the line, and with the exception of some unusually large caliber artillery falling in our area, estimated to be 380MM, and dubbed by the GIs as "Alsace Avalanche", very little activity occurred during the day. This artillery is 100MM, larger than the "Anzio Express" enemy artillery piece, which gained much respect on the beachhead in Italy.

Our patrols were operated across the river once again., "A" Troop and "C" Troop each sending an Officer and ten enlisted men to separate objectives with the mission of procuring prisoners of war for identification purposes.

Major General Dahlquist, C.G. 36th Division is vitally interested in obtaining information concerning enemy units on the Squadron's front as the terrain and river crossing sites made it a plausible spot for a contemplated attack by the Division. The General has stopped in at the Squadron Command Post twice in the last three days to familiarize himself with our current tactical situation.

Patrols are aware of the necessity for getting those enemy identifications and have put forth extra effort to procure the necessary prisoners. Tonight's patrol ran into trouble as the 636th TD Bn. was engaged in the mission of firing star shells, highly illuminating projectiles, into Camp de Oberhoffen, an enemy strong point on our right front close to our patrolling territory. The moon was clear and bright affording excellent visibility across the flooded flats and increasing the patrols hazards by lighting their every movement.

The firing of the 3 inch star shells increased the illumination in the area and the spotlights were further augmented by the enemy himself, who threw numerous flares over the area in an effort to discover our patrols. A telephone call quickly stopped the use of the star shells, but enemy flare activity continued unabated; as many as five illuminating flares being in the air at one time.

20, February 1945 - Our line remained quiet with scattered rounds of enemy artillery falling during the period. Troop "C" relieved the Recon. Co. of the 636th TD Bn. at 1930 hours.

Troop "A" and the Reconnaissance Co. of the 636th TD Bn. operated patrols across the Moder River during the hours of darkness. The flood stages of the stream have subsided and the river is now entirely back to its original channel, leaving the flats very soft and muddy. Consequently, the patrols experienced difficulty tonight in moving quietly because every step brought forth a heavy sucking sound. Both patrols were obliged to withdraw into our own territory because of a large enemy patrol moving in on them. Enemy vehicular movement was heard and an enemy machine gun was located by the patrol. Artillery was directed on these targets.

21, February - An increase in enemy artillery and mortar fire revived activity on our front and numerous observed artillery missions were fired on enemy installations. No rotation of troops on the line was made pending a shifting of our line and a complete readjustment of our defenses. The French 3rd D.I.A. (Division, Infantry, Algeria) has been assigned the sector on our immediate right flank and our positions will be shifted to the right several hundred yards.

Reconnaissance is being made today of the ground to our right for which we are to assume responsibility and "A" Troop is preparing to move into the "B" Troop positions and include the new boundary in their defensive line.



Our patrol activity was hampered once again by an alert enemy. The river was crossed without incident and a supporting line of fire was set up on the north bank to preclude the possibility of an enemy patrol working its way behind our people and cutting off their river crossing site. Enemy riflemen fired on our patrols before either patrol had reached its first objective.

The enemy is becoming very sensitive to our patrol activity.

22, February 1945 - Enemy personnel activity has become almost non-existent during the daylight hours along our front. Our close observation and active, accurate artillery and mortar fire on the enemy front has forced him into hiding during the day.

The 36th Reconnaissance Troop and Troops "C" and "B" held the line during the period, supported by one platoon of the 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion and Troop "E's" 105MM Howitzers. Company "F" remained in alert reserve. Troop "A" and the Recon. Co. of the 636th TD Bn. remained in reserve and Troop "A" reconnoitered the new positions on the right flank, made contact with the 1st Battalion, 4th RCT and occupied positions with the first platoon of "A" troop by 2100 hours.

Liaison was established with the French Command Post by an officer who reported to Oberhoffen with a team of radio operators for the SCR 193 for remaining in constant touch with this Headquarters.

A broadcast made in German by the PWB on our front has accomplished some lucrative results.

Interrogation of the five deserters who entered our lines in the past two days has disclosed the poor morale of the troops opposing us, and has led us to believe a further broadcast tomorrow might well be even more successful in obtaining prisoners.

The 36th Recon. Troop and Troop "B" each operated small patrols toward enemy positions tonight in an attempt to procure prisoners. The 36th's patrol encountered two ten man enemy counter-patrols, indicating the enemy's sensitivity to our nightly forays. This counter-activity lost us the element of surprise. The "B" Troop patrol reached the edge of the Moder River and drew heavy small arms and machine gun fire from the wood line 200 yards across the river. They also received artillery fire and mortar fire. In directing our artillery on the enemy MG positions, our patrol leaders sighted a four man enemy patrol silhouetted by the flash of a shell burst. The patrol leader brought the artillery down closer behind the patrol herding them toward himself. Two enemy were wounded, one killed and one taken prisoner, being forced to swim the river under threat of our grenades and sub-machine guns.

Enemy artillery has increased somewhat during this period.

23, February 1945 - All Troops in the lines reconnoitered positions to their flanks and relieved the successive positions from left to right, relief started by elements of the 4th Battalion, 143rd RCT moving into the 36th Reconnaissance Troop's left flank area. The 36th Recon Troop then shifted its left platoon over to Troop "C" s left flank, relieving them. Troop "C" relieved "B" Troop's left flank and "A" Troop relieved the remainder of Troop "B" .The relief was completed at 2310 hours. Troop "B" moved into Squadron reserve. The 636th's Recon. Co. remained in reserve accomplishing tactical night patrol practice and instruction while in reserve. Troop "E" remained in its present positions, supporting the forward elements of the Squadron and Company "F" remained in alert reserve, shifting its positions slightly to suit the adjusted line of the Squadron.

The adjustment moved the entire Squadron sector approximately one thousand yards to the east to enable us to tie in our defensive positions with the French on the new 7th Army right boundary. The French First Army has now moved up to occupy the defensive sector along the Rhine River.

Daylight activity on the part of the Germans was negligible, and enemy artillery and mortar shelling was scattered on our front.

We operated two night patrols into enemy territory to procure POWs. Troop "C's" patrol of five men remained in enemy territory north of the Moder River for five hours, drawing MG fire on two occasions but making no other contact. The 36th Recon, Troop's patrol of 5 men remained across the river for 4 1/2 hours, making no contact. The very bright moon and enemy flare activity seriously hampered any patrol movement on the broad river flats.

24, February 1945 - The enemy launched a company strength attack against the French forces on our right flank in Oberhoffen this morning at 0100 hours. The attack gained no ground and was completely quelled by 0235 hours. Our machine gun outpost on our right flank was forced out of its position by the flat trajectory fire but was re-established twenty minutes later. The enemy lapsed once again into his defensive role.

Daylight hours were spent by the troops in the line checking their positions and insuring that all areas between units were well integrated in their defensive fire plans. Enemy track vehicle activity was heard generally along the front during the period but poor visibility gave us few observed targets for artillery.

Patrols were sent out by each of the three Troops on the line, Troops "A" and "C" and the 36th Reconnaissance Troop to reconnoiter enemy areas and afford security to the front. These patrols remained in close observation of the enemy positions in order to alert our forces in the event of a possible attack.

The 3rd Battalion, 143rd RCT on our right flank captured two prisoners tonight who revealed under interrogation that they had been out on reconnaissance for an attack in battalion strength planned in this sector for tonight between 2100 and 2200 hours.

No attack materialized although enemy personnel were observed in two groups of 30-40 men just north of Hagenau. These groups may have been part of the attacking force but our artillery quickly dispersed them.

Troop "A" observed an enemy self-propelled gun close to the RJ just south of Camp de Oberhoffen at dusk. Artillery fire obtained a direct hit on the first round fired. Succeeding rounds were unobserved because of dust and darkness.

Enemy artillery and mortar fire continued light, harassing our front lines during the period.

25, February 1945 - No change today was made in the troops holding the line. Very little enemy activity was observed. The entire VI Corps sector seems very quiet and will probably remain so until the northern offensive in the XV Corps sector has made substantial gains.

Several artillery missions were fired on enemy personnel observed in MG positions or in houses across the river. After dark, listening posts were sent out to the river's edge as a warning system. No other enemy contact reported during the period.

26, February 1945 - A very quiet day on our front was passed with only enemy harassing artillery fire coming into our sector. Troop "A" received approximately 15 rounds of 150mm shells in their village of Kaltenhouse during the day, setting one house on fire.

The line was held by the 36th Recon, Troop, Troop "C" and Troop "A". At dark, The Recon Co. of the 636th TD BN. relieved the 36th Reconnaissance Troop and occupied the left flank defensive positions. The relief was completed without event but because of the light strength of the 636th's Recon. Co., eight men and two machine guns from the 36th remained in position.

The 143rd Infantry Regimental Combat Team is on the Squadron's left flank and the 4th RRT is on the right. Both reported very little activity.

Troop "B", in Squadron reserve, fired its machine guns and rifles today on the range just north of Brumath and was able to include instruction in weapons and firing for some of the newer reinforcements.

"E" Troop and "F" Company remained in their supporting roles. "F" Company is now replacing the M5 and M5A1 light tanks, with which it has been equipped, with the new M-24 "Gen. Chaffe" light tank. Many advantages accrue from this change as the new tank has 15 inch track and mounts the 75mm M5 aircraft type cannon. The increase in firepower and mobility is a great asset to the tank company and to the Squadron.

For some time now the Squadron has been in the area that is farthest east of any of the troops on the western front. Now the Squadron is on the south flank of all American forces on this front.

27, February 1945 - No patrols were operated during the period by our personnel. The line was held by the Recon. Co. of the 636th TD Bn., Troop "C" and Troop "A" until 2000 hours when "B" Troop relieved "C" Troop in the line. Troop "A" received enemy mortar and machine gun fire and directed our artillery against enemy positions.

The enemy launched an attack against the French on our immediate right flank at 2145 in an effort to obtain POWs. The attack was repulsed and all reported under control at 2300.

28, February 1945 - The Squadron continued to occupy the defensive positions along the Moder River on the right flank of the VIth corps. The enemy was passive during the daylight hours.

The 36th Reconnaissance Troop and Troop "C" remained in reserve. Again tonight, after dark, the enemy became active on our right flank and at 2215 hours launched an attack, estimated to be at company strength, against the French in the town of Oberhoffen. The enemy was repulsed after a short engagement and our front was quiet.

#### MARCH 1945

1, March 1945 - The Reconnaissance Company of the 636th TD Bn. maintained positions on the left of the Squadron sector. Troop "B" continued to hold the center of the line and "A" Troop maintained positions on the right of the sector. Troop "C" and the 36th Reconnaissance Troop remained in Squadron reserve and "C" Troop worked on vehicular maintenance and cleaning of weapons prior to the Ordnance Inspection.

Troop "B" operated one patrol across the Moder River after dark in an effort to procure prisoners. No POWs were taken. At 1915, elements of 2nd Battalion, 143rd Infantry commenced relief of the forward elements of the line. The relief was completed at 2315 hours.

2, March 1945 - The Squadron moved by Troop to a new assembly area for training in the vicinity of Marmoutier, south of Saverne. The troops moved at half-hour intervals during the morning with the exception of Troop "C" which remained in the vicinity of Marienthal and underwent ordnance, materiel and weapons inspection during the morning and moved to the new assembly area in the afternoon. All troops had closed in at the new location by 1500. Company "F" turned in 11 more of the M5 series of light tanks, and drew 11 more M24s making a total of 16 M24 light tanks now in the Company.

The training schedules for this ten day period are already published and cover detailed supervised training in all weapons, range firing, field firing and combat patrol exercises, all of which we have felt necessary for some time, especially for the newer reinforcements. Training films will be shown each evening.

3, March 1945 - All Troops conducted training in accordance with the schedule set up. The schedule consisted primarily of organized motor maintenance.

Preparation for range details was started. Colonel Adams, IGD, visited today. Captain Zecca and Major Brown visited VI Corps Headquarters. Colonel Chalmers, Deputy Chief of staff, VI Corps visited the Cp today.

4, March 1945 - Today, the troops were free with the exception of a lecture on "Pre-Capture" given by G2, VI Corps. It was termed by all a very well given lecture. Colonels King and Brown, Chaplains from VI Corps, conducted services for the Squadron in the latter part of the afternoon. Many of the boys attended local church services in their respective areas. Captain Zecca started looking for firing ranges and returned without much success. The weather turned cold with rain and snow late in the day.

5, March 1945 - Captain Zecca continued to search for firing ranges in the immediate area adjacent to the Troops. Limited firing points were found and it is anticipated that a good deal of the firing and training will be conducted close to the troop assembly areas. This will permit troops to devote more time to training and will reduce, considerably the amount of time necessary in traveling to the training areas.

Major Samsel was present at the ceremonies at VI Corps Headquarters on the occasion of the presentation of decorations and awards to personnel of the VIth Corps. Our Squadron was well represented in the receiving of awards. The first recipient of the Legion of Merit was Tec 4 Raymond Bryan for his excellent duties as radio operator in the net control station. Colonel Heffner, Observer from the AGF, visited with the CP in search of "Lessons Learned in Combat".

Major Samsel spoke with him for a considerable length of time. Another movie was shown this evening. The training film accompanying the main feature was entitled "Enemy Booby Traps". The weather remained damp and cold.

6, March 1945 - This morning a field firing range for LMGs was found and preparations were commenced for its use. The combat patrol course was prepared for use and Captain Schenk has charge of this firing. Captain Malragon checked and prepared for the firing of the 37mm guns on the range at St. Jean. The "A" Troop Ordnance inspection was completed today and all Troops continued in their respective phases of training. The weather continued as the previous day with rain and snow flurries.

7, March 1945 - Troops continued intensive training during the day. The rainy weather did not interfere with any of the troops in their activities. Ten defense small arms ranges were in operation throughout the Squadron area. Today was the first firing on the LMG field firing ranges and it proved very successful. The men enjoyed it very much and seemed to receive a lot of training from it. The Combat Patrol course continued to be accepted with very favorable remarks. Both "A" and "B" Troop completed 37mm firing today. In general, the training program is progressing very well and the troops are deriving a great deal of benefit from the firing. The weather was rainy and visibility poor.

8, March 1945 - Our weapons firing program continued today even though the intermittent rains and wind interfered considerably with the firing. We made use of the new known distance range at Lutzelbourg and succeeded in firing two Reconnaissance Troops during the day. Our new tanks had their first opportunity to fire the 75mm gun. Recommendations for the modifications on the new light tanks have been submitted to the Ordnance personnel. Representatives of the IG Department continued spot checks on supply records, personnel records and living and mess conditions of the men. The weather was squally.

9, March 1945 - The Troops continued to conduct intensive training. The majority of the weapons firing has been completed and we are now stressing squad, section and platoon exercises. Both the tank platoons and the assault gun platoons have been given the opportunity to work with the reconnaissance platoons. The clear weather today was a nice change over the wind and rain of the past few days. Troops continued to get a great deal of training from the combat patrol course and the field firing course

10, March 1945 - The Squadron continued its intensive training schedule, firing the M24 tank guns, 75mm, and all weapons on ranges. The Combat Patrol Range finished up it's courses today, having run through all personnel of the nine reconnaissance platoons. The weather has been poor for this training with almost continuous showers and continued cloudiness. Today, the sun broke through for about half the day.

11, March 1945 - Training continued with all units engaged in special instructions and practice. Training films were shown to all personnel in the evening.

12, March 1945 - The Troops cleaned up the balance of the training, as scheduled, this morning. The Troops have accomplished much in the past ten days in bringing up the standard of efficiency in operations. This is the first time since "D" Day, 15 August 1944 that we have been able to devote this much time to orienting our reinforcements to our type of tactical employment, and use of weapons. This afternoon, the Squadron formed on a large field just north of Marmoutier, France to receive decorations and awards, receive the Squadron Battle Colors and hold a Retreat Formation. Major General Edward H, Brooks, C.G., VI Corps, presented the awards and officially tendered the Colors to Major Samsel, Squadron Commander, mentioning to the Major that he hoped the Squadron would, with these Colors, head the VIth Corps to victory in Germany. The Commanding General reviewed the Squadron and seemed pleased and impressed with the condition of the personnel.

The 42nd Division (Rainbow Division) Band furnished the martial music and sounded Retreat at the ceremony.

13 March 1945 - The Squadron is now attached to the 42nd Infantry Division for what promises to be a very aggressive operation in an attack northeast through the Hartz Mountains, across the German border and to the Rhine River.

The terrain ahead is extremely mountainous and poses a rugged beauty that we could enjoy as civilian tourists but which poses a monstrous problem for our tactical operation. The area is veined with a network of streams, narrow trails, steep slopes and heavy timber.

It is planned that the 3rd Battalion, 242nd Infantry Regiment will attack through the defensive positions now held by our Troops, "C" on the left, "B" in the center and "A" on the right of the defense line. The 222nd Infantry Regiment holds a defensive line on our right and the 5th Regiment, 71st Infantry Division is defending on our left. Troop "C" is establishing lateral contact with them today.

A four man enemy patrol contacted our lines at 2100 hours and were engaged in a firefight. One of our men sustained gunshot wound in the leg. The enemy patrol was dispersed after a hot exchange of fire, and moans were heard from the Germans. No sign of enemy wounded was evident when the area was investigated.

The 2nd Platoon of Co. "B", 610 TD Bn., has been attached to the Squadron for this operation.

Company "B", less one platoon, 142nd Engineer Bn., as well as the 401 Field Artillery Bn. have been assigned to support the Squadron.

14, March 1945 - Troops continued to occupy the defensive line with no change in Troops occupying the line. Troop "C" is on the left, "B" is in the center and "A" is on the right. The enemy holds the high ground on both sides of the valley which runs north northeast to Mouterhouse, 3 1/2 kilometers behind enemy lines; our Command Post location of the eventful New Years Eve of 1944-1945. The Squadron has a special score to settle in this operation to square the debt and take revenge for the ground we displaced from on the 1st of January.

The enemy has excellent observation of the area from his vantage point and effectively directs mortar and artillery fire at the slightest movement in or near the village of Althorn where Troop "C" has its CP. Just the starting of a bantam engine brings down a concentration of enemy shells. Co. "B" of the 142nd Engineers had two 6 x 6, 2 1/2 ton trucks and one bantam receive direct hits from the accurate enemy shelling when they attempted to move the vehicles.

"A" and "B" Troops fronts were relatively quiet and "C" Troop continued to receive occasional rounds of enemy mortar fire at the end of the period.

(The editor of this chronicle, was advised on March 14, 1945, by his Platoon Leader, Lt. David Nelson, that he was granted a three day leave to Paris; departing that day. This leave, his first since the Squadron was in England in 1942. On his return, as you will see in subsequent paragraphs, he found that the action of the next day was costly to his platoon. Enemy anti-personnel mines brought about the death of a friend and fine soldier, Sgt. Bill Foster. Several others sustained serious leg wounds from mines and still others were injured by artillery and mortar fire. Bill Foster was a fine Section Sergeant and leader of men. As both comrade and leader he would be seriously missed. - The leave was a welcome respite, but one always wonders if events would have differed had one been there.)

15, March 1945 - At 0700 hours elements of the 242nd Infantry Regiment of the 42nd Division commenced passing through the "A" and "B" Troop defensive positions to the north on the start of this offensive to clear all the enemy from the territory west of the Rhine. Troops "A" and "B" moved out of positions after the 3rd and 2nd Battalions respectively had cleared the front line.

With "B" Troop in the lead and "A" Troop following to the flank and rear, proceeded north along high ground toward Mouterhouse. Troop "C" left one platoon in the defensive line to contain enemy remaining on high ground opposite our left flank.

The remainder of "C" Troop displaced forward toward Mouterhouse, moving dismounted along the slope of the high ground east of the valley road into the town.

The Troops continued their forward movement throughout the hours of darkness; "A" and "B" Troops reaching a point of high ground overlooking the village. Here they were met by heavy enemy small arms and machine gun fire to the front and left flank as the period closed.

Troop "C" reported enemy dug in on the sloping ground overlooking the valley approximately two kilometers south of Mouterhouse which opposed them as the period closed. 13 enlisted men from Troop "C" and one from Troop "A" were wounded today by enemy Shu mines sown profusely across the enemy's front line, and from artillery and mortar fire directed at our installations in Althorn. Three officers were wounded, Captain Nugent hit by shrapnel, and Lieutenants Nelson and Owen, both of "C" Troop who were wounded by Schu mines.

As you saw on the preceding page, the Squadron daily reports failed to report the names of the 13 enlisted men who were casualties in "C" Troop on March 15. Now, after all these years, with the help of Joe Burkart who was with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Squad of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon of "C" Troop that fateful day, we have identified some of the men who were injured. In addition, we now have a pretty good description of how and where it all happened. Joe has also told us about the other men present who came to the aid of their fellow Squad members. The following, as best I can reconstruct it, is what happened:

When the Troops moved out that morning, the first and third Platoons of "C" Troop were assigned to the left flank of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Division attack. Cpl Claiborne's 3<sup>rd</sup> Squad of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon had the extreme left of the movement. Sgt. Foster, leading that group, wisely decided to move into the heavily wooded area to the right of the road and proceed up a narrow ravine. He did this to evade direct fire from enemy self-propelled guns that had fired on them from the high ground across the road the day before.

Cpl. Roy Claiborne took the left flank of his Squad and put "Pop" Wadley on the right flank. They moved up the ravine without incident. After covering about 200 yards, they ascended to high ground. It was there that their troubles began!

Fully expecting the attack to come from this direction, the Germans had reinforced their defenses with extensive minefields in front of their positions. They had sewn the densely wooded area heavily with their dangerous, anti-personnel "Schu" mines. (The Schu mine is most difficult to see when well placed in the earth. When stepped on it causes not only foot and leg injuries, but also puts up an air burst which throws off considerable shrapnel creating other rather extensive body injuries.)

When the men came out of the ravine and moved up onto the high ground about two kilometers south of their Mouterhouse, (see red arrow on map 35A) they walked unsuspectingly directly into the field of well-concealed mines. Their first awareness of their problem came with two almost simultaneous explosions. Cpl. Claiborne and "Pop" Wadley had each stepped on a mine. Roy fell to the ground. He had lost about half of one foot and incurred shrapnel injuries as well. "Pop" Wadley, in addition to being hit with shrapnel, lost one foot up to his ankle. Another Squad member named Schirey, who was directly behind Wadley, received numerous shrapnel hits. (Sorry, I have been unable to find Schirey's first name). Private Paul Null, who was directly behind Cpl. Roy Claiborne, was miraculously uninjured. He immediately began to help Roy as best he could while awaiting assistance from the medics.

By this time, a number of other men had advanced into the area. Sgt. Bill Foster, who was roughly in the center of the Squad acting quickly to help the wounded. He turned to assist the Medic who came forward immediately with one end of his stretcher dragging on the ground. Just as Foster got to him, the stretcher hit a mine. The medic and Bill Foster both fell to the ground with shrapnel wounds.

As Sgt. Foster fell to the ground. Lt. Harold Owen who was directly behind him and Lt Nelson immediately behind Owen were both hit by the airburst. Lt Owen fell directly on top of Foster. As he landed, at least one more mine was set off at Sgt. Foster's shoulder causing additional injury to both men. Sgt. Foster lost his shoulder with the second explosion. His injury was fatal.

Lt Owen was reduced to semi-consciousness. He was bleeding profusely but his wounds were not fatal. Lt. Nelson was still standing, but was disoriented. He too was bleeding from shrapnel wounds.

Joe Burkart, (a T5, not long with the squadron), with great presence of mind, yelled "Stop where you are! Probe for mines!" He put Lt Owen in a safe spot by a tree, told Lt Nelson to stand still by the tree and told both - "don't move!" He then started to look for footprints, a good sign of safe places to step in moving around and out of the minefield. He then assisted the medics get Foster, Owen and Nelson out of the mined area and into ambulances for evacuation to the field hospital. Without question, the prompt common sense directions of this young man prevented more numerous casualties than had already occurred. Other Troopers, Jim Rankin, Tec5s John Korten and Sam Capelli, Pvt. Charles Black, and others came up immediately to help with the wounded. All of them treading carefully in this mine infested area, but they knew how to deal with it and took the risks to help their buddies.

16, March 1945 - The Troops remained in contact with the enemy until daylight when Troop "C" was withdrawn to the vicinity of the Squadron CP and held in reserve. This gave "C" Troop a chance to bring up its vehicles and be prepared to mount and exploit any breakthrough of the enemy's delaying line. The vehicles of Troops "A" and "B" have been brought up to the Squadron CP area also and personnel from Headquarters Troop are alerted to drive them on up to meet the Troops if the tactical situation makes a mounted operation possible.

Troop "A" attempted to cross the road in the valley at daylight, but an alert enemy reacted sharply with A/W, artillery and mortar fire. Troops "A" and "B" sent patrols into Mouterhouse hourly, but heavy fire was directed on the patrols each time they entered. Lt., Caldwell of "A" Troop was killed by enemy fire, and Private Bogocius, of his platoon, was also killed.

Two other enlisted men were wounded by enemy fire. The road from Althorn to Mouterhouse was blocked by fallen trees and mined with AT and AP mines. An Engineer platoon swept the road and pulled a 250 pound aerial bomb from the road. A tank dozer pushed it's way through four 85 to 100 tree roadblocks and cleared the road by 1130 hours.

Troop "A" assembled in Squadron reserve and brought its vehicles forward during the day in preparation for mounted operation. The Squadron moved out of the dugouts it had occupied for the past two nights and set up a Command Post on the town of Barenthal.

17, March 1945 - Troop "C" was mounted and executed aggressive reconnaissance in the left of the Division sector. Troop "B" mounted and conducted reconnaissance in the right of the sector. During the hours of darkness, the enemy had withdrawn, evidently intending to go to the Siegfried defenses for his next defense. Troop "B" reached the village of Neunhoffen, ten kilometers east and five kilometers north of Mouterhouse. at 1730 and met dug in enemy and A/W weapons fire from the high ground just north of town. 75mm direct fire was placed on the enemy positions by the M24 light tank platoon of Co. "F" which was attached to Troop "B". This brought rapid artillery retaliation from the Germans.

All bridges east and north of Neunhoffen are destroyed and the enemy has blown large craters in the roads to impede our progress.

Troop "C" reconnaissance patrols are halted in the left of the Division sector by blown bridges and were searching for by-passes as the period closed.

18, March 1945 - The Squadron continued to maintain contact with the XV Corps elements on the left, establishing liaison with the 100th Division and the 71st Division.

"A" Troop continued to remain in Squadron reserve. Troops "B" and "C" conducted aggressive reconnaissance ahead of the foot elements of the 42nd "Rainbow" Division.

They reported all bridges blown and all main avenues to the north blocked by mines and felled trees. By searching out by-passes, the Troops were able to progress an additional eight kilometers to the north and reestablish contact with the fleeing enemy in the vicinity of Ludwigswinkel , Germany. "C" Troop was the first across the border with Major Samsel accompanying the leading platoon. This is, the second time the Squadron has had elements in Germany. The previous occasion was in the early part of December 1944 when the 3rd Platoon of "C" Troop patrolled to Berg, north of Lauterberg, across the Lauter River.

Ludwigswinkel was entered and troop "B" sent patrols to the north of the town where 88mm flat trajectory fire knocked out one of our bantams with a direct hit.

The enemy continued to hold the area north of Luwigswinkel throughout the night, employing M/G, S/A and mortar fire against our elements.

Troop "C" encountered pill- boxes and dug in enemy as the period closed. The Squadron CP moved to Obersteinbach, 1/2 kilometer south of the German border.

19 March 1945 - Troop "A" relieved Troop "C" this morning at 0700 hours in the left of the 42nd Division sector and continued aggressive reconnaissance to the north with Troop "B" performing the same mission in the right of the Division Sector. The Squadron continued to maintain contact with elements of the XV Corps on the left; the 14th Regiment of the 71st Division being met by our patrol.



The enemy is obviously unaware of the large breach in his line to the north by the 3rd Army and continues to fight a tenacious delaying action in this sector, sealing the fate of all his troops west of the Rhine by not clearing the Hartz Mountain sector immediately, before the XV and XXL American Corps cut his escape routes over the river. The forward elements of troop "B" were met in the area just north of Fischbach, six kilometers inside the German border, by enemy AT and SP gun fire. Bridges are blown on every road and all mountain trails are heavily blocked by felled trees averaging 20 inches in diameter. In many places, trees are still standing with notches cut at their bases and charges of explosive in place. Our advance did not allow the enemy time to complete his plan of delay.

Forward elements of troop "A" met SP fire just north of Ludwigswinkel and two enlisted men were wounded. Enemy artillery was directed against our forces in the town until after dark.

Troop "C" remained in reserve with the exception of the 2nd platoon, which continued patrols north and reached the towns of Trulbin and Eppenbrun on the VI Corps left boundary as the period closed. Troop "E" and Company "F" supported forward elements of the Squadron.

20, March 1945 - Troops "A", "B" and "C" continued to meet cratered and mined roads and trails, blown bridges and road blocks across the entire sector of the mountains. Contact with the enemy was light, however, with only a few scattered rounds of enemy 120mm mortar fire falling in the town of Eppenbrun late in the period. Because of the terrain difficulties, the Squadron was once again dismounted from its vehicles and occupied a defensive line in the hills just south of Eppenbrun to establish physical contact with elements of the 71st Division, XVth Corps on the left and the 242nd Regiment of the 42nd Division on the right, defending the wooded section of ground in between until forward movement is again possible. The Reconnaissance Troops were in position by 1700 and held the sector without incident at the close of this period.

21, March 1945 - The Squadron held the defensive line between the VIth Corps left flank and the 242nd Infantry Regiment throughout the period. Dismounted patrols were operated to the north to check the area and attempt to make enemy contact. An "A" Troop patrol reported large craters in the roads and one large road block on a mountain trail. The patrol drew 30 rounds of enemy artillery and mortar fire at 1530 hours. Troop "B" patrols reported the high ground to the direct front of its defensive positions to be clear of enemy. A Troop "C" patrol reported many AP mines, tank traps and road blocks to their front. Troop "C" moved all of its defensive positions forward at 1700 to occupy ground just above the main road running east and west between Eppenbrun Q87-57 and Ludwigswinkel Q94-53..

22 March 1945 - The Squadron occupied a defensive sector on the hills just south of Eppenbrun until 1200 hours when a new mission of mounted reconnaissance to the north was given to Major Samsel by the CO of the 42nd Division.

Troop "A" proceeded mounted north to Trulben, 5 kilometers south of Pirmasens where they again encountered many roadblocks, mines, and craters impeding their progress. Troop "B" was attached to the Task Force Studer, which was composed of "B" and "C" Companies of the 48th Tank Battalion and one company of the 232<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment. This force progressed as far as Busenberg, 9 kilometers north of the German border and 11 kilometers north of Ludwigswinkel, running into parties of semi-organized resistance and taking prisoners.

Troop "C" mounted an attempt to find bypasses through the maze of blocked trails in the mountainous sector north of Eppenbrun and were still working at that task with no breakthrough found as the period closed.

One platoon of Troop "C" was left in position dismounted to contain an enemy pocket of resistance consisting of an undetermined number of riflemen and an observation party.

This enemy group was scouted as the period closed and found to have evacuated the area, leaving guns intact in position.

23, March 1945 - At the opening of the period Troop "A" was moved into Squadron reserve. Troop "B" held and outposted the town of Busenberg, still under the wing of the Studer Task Force until 1535 when it was released from that organization, reverted to Squadron control and moved to an assembly area with Troop "A" at Obersteinbach, just south of the German border. Troop "C" continued to reconnoiter to the north and established an outpost at the town of Lemberg, 2 1/2 kilometers southeast of Pirmasens and patrolled roads between elements of the XXI Corps in that city and elements of the 42nd Division on our right. (The Lemberg Story may be of interest. It follows this Paragraph.), Troop "E" and Company "F" also were assembled south of the German border preparing for a new Squadron mission.

#### The 3rd Platoon, Troop "C" occupies Lemberg, Germany

Proceeding north on a secondary road with the objective of the town of Lemberg, your editor with one section of his platoon approached an intersection where the road to the left would take us right into town roughly a mile up the road. The entrance to the road was mined, and while considering whether it was safe to by-pass those obstacles and move ahead, two young boys, perhaps 12 years old, approached and told us that some soldiers in town wished to surrender, and asked if we would come in to take them prisoner. I told them (I speak German fluently) we would do so, found we could by-pass the mines safely and proceeded into town.

Just outside of the village, was a wooded, low mountainous area with a fair sized hill on the left, at the foot of which, on a rise of ground under some trees, stood a reinforced platoon of German soldiers. They were formed in three ranks with their personal equipment laid out before them as though for an Inspector General's inspection. When we arrived and dismounted, they came to attention and presented themselves for surrender.

It was the as formal a surrender as that of General Von Neuling not-with-standing the fact that there was no such high ranking officer present.

Following the formalities of their capitulation, and about to proceed into town to see the Burgermeister (Mayor), the two boys came to me and asked, "What about the towns people?"

When I told them I was going into town to instruct the Burgermeister, they interrupted, "But they are afraid, they need to know what to do now. You need to tell them! They are all in the bunker".

Where is that I asked? "Behind you, they said, under the mountain. Come we will take you to them." I left my men in charge of the prisoners, and Tommy gun in hand, followed the boys into a pitch black narrow passage for about 75 to 100 feet until I saw a dim glow and then stepped into a massive candle lit underground shelter packed to the walls with very nervous and some sniffling townspeople. I called for their attention and advised them to return to their homes, that they should remain off the streets between dark and dawn, that we would outpost and secure the area and I assured them that they had nothing to fear from us as long as they were responsive to our controls. I then left them with their children to return to their homes. The residents were responsive and respectful. No problems ensued. We outposted the town and settled in for the night.

#### The following resumes coverage from the Squadron Daily Reports

Troop "C" was released of patrol responsibility at the opening of the period and at daylight moved south to an assembly area in Squadron reserve in Obersteinbach.

At 0800, March 24, 1945, the Squadron was relieved of attachment to the 42nd division and attached to the 102nd Cavalry Group per VO G3, VI Corps. The 102nd had come south from the U.S. 1st Army. You will recall, the 102nd Cavalry was the "Parent of our Squadron", Left behind in England in December, 1942.

Squadron Headquarters moved to Obersteinbach and Troops "A", "B" and "F" Company commenced the establishment of Cossack outposts to cover all trails and roads in our assigned sector leading into France from across the German border; with the mission of apprehending all civilians, enemy soldiers or allied stragglers for processing by the CIC team assigned to the Squadron for that purpose. Troops were in position by 1630 hours. 22 Italian ex-German POWs, and 9 French ex-German POWs were apprehended crossing the border.

The 38th Reconnaissance Squadron of the 102nd Cavalry Group, is on our right flank. Elements of the 13th Company, 26th Infantry Regiment ( French), are on our left doing the same type of border patrol.

25, March 1945 - The Squadron maintained the Cossack outposts with Troops "A", "B" and Co. "F" manning the positions throughout the period. One civilian was apprehended attempting to cross the border and he was processed by CIC.

The Squadron CP is located in a resort hotel in this border town in the Hartz Mountains. The owners of the Hotel have had many and varied guests during the last few years. High officials of the French Government were here in 1938 while making inspections of the Maginot Line fortifications. Later, the German officials were guests here while making inspections of the Siegfried Line defenses.

The surrounding country is very picturesque and on many of the lofty mountain crags, are the remnants of ruined castles built in the days of the cavaliers; 1300 to 1500 years ago. This same ground has been fought over periodically since man inhabited the area, the terrain being naturally adapted to ideal defense.

26, March 1945 - A slight adjustment in the right of the Squadron boundary was made today and Company "F" of the 38th Cavalry Recon. Squadron relieved four of "B" Troop's outpost positions on the right flank.

Four civilians attempting to cross the border, were apprehended by our border patrol posts, and were processed by the CIC. Liaison and contact was maintained by Troop "A" on the left flank with elements of the 13th Company of the French 26th Regiment. Troop "B" maintained contact with "C" Troop and with "F" Company of the 38th Cavalry Reconnaissance Sqdn. on the right. Officer patrols checked all outposts twice during the day.

Colonel Dolph and Lt Col. Burke of the 102nd Cavalry group toured all outposts with Major Samsel and seemed highly pleased with this organization.

27, March 1945 - Yesterday evening one of the men at Number 2 Company " F" outpost accidentally exploded a booby-trapped anti-personnel mine, but fortunately was not injured by the blast. It is obvious that the entire sector demands careful inspection, since the 38th Recon. Squadron, performing an identical mission on the right, had two men wounded by mines the first day they moved into the position.

News travels rapidly amongst civilians and it is apparent that the information that the roadblocks are operating along the border has become widespread because traffic had diminished to almost nothing.

One civilian was apprehended crossing the border today and was processed by the CIC.

28, March 1945 - Today was a very quiet one in the entire Squadron sector. The French who were scouring the mountains inside the German border turned over five German POWs to one of the "A" Troop outposts.

They were all in civilian clothes, but carried their "Soldbuchs".

Two civilians were apprehended and processed by the CIC team attached to the Squadron.

At 1900 word was received by telephone from Colonel Dolph that our mission was changed and that the Squadron should assemble tomorrow morning, pulling out of the border outpost positions commencing at 0900, 29 March 1945.

29, March 1945 - After an uneventful night out-posting all roads crossing the Franco-German border in our sector, the Squadron received orders from the 102nd Cavalry Group that effective at 0900, the Group was relieved of attachment to the VI Corps and had orders to return to the 1st Army sector. The Squadron received orders from VI Corps to pull in all outposts and assemble Troops preparatory to moving to a new Assembly area.

Troops were assembled in designated areas in the vicinity of Obersteinbach by 0930 hours and quartering parties were sent out to Edenkoben, above Landau, to prepare for the move into that area. Traffic control authorities of Corps could not allow the move today so the Troops spent the day doing preventive motor maintenance, vehicle and weapons maintenance and prepared to make the road march early tomorrow.

Warren Kennett, War correspondent from the "Newark Evening News", a New Jersey Newspaper, reported as Official Correspondent for the Squadron. He had previously been with the 102nd Cavalry Group.

30, March 1945 - The Squadron was assembled awaiting clearance to move from the VI Corps Traffic Control authorities until 0900 hours when it started its move to Edenkoben, about 10 kilometers north of Landau. The new move is just an adjusting move to bring the Squadron nearer to Corps Headquarters, in preparation for our next mission. The Troops and Squadron Headquarters made the thirty-four kilometer trip from Obersteinbach through hilly country and over rapidly deteriorating roads without incident and closed into the area in the vicinity of Edenkoben before 1430.

At 1700, G3, VI Corps, ordered an additional move to place the entire Squadron across the Rhine and into Mannheim through Ludwigshafen. (See Maps pgs 68A, B, C & D for operations areas from Mar 30, 1945 thru May 17, 1945 when we departed from Austrian Occupation).

It is difficult to follow the exact routes of the Troops during these last fast moving days of the war. Troops were often widely dispersed and the names of many of the towns and villages that were objectives do not appear in the Daily Reports.

All Troops moved out once more. The first personnel reached the east bank of the Rhine at 1845, and all Troops were across by 2015. Immediate patrol activity was initiated to sweep the streets of civilians and to set up security for the pontoon bridge crossing the Rhine.

VI Corps Headquarters plans to move tomorrow to a small village about 5 kilometers southeast of Mannheim, and Troop "B" proceeded immediately to that area to operate patrols and outposts for area security.

Both Ludwigshafen and Mannheim are completely demolished but still harbor hostile individual civilians and soldiers who sneak out of cellars to way-lay American officers. Two American officers are reported to have been stabbed, and two more were reported missing from Mannheim on the night of 29, March 1945.

Orders have been issued to all Troops instructing officers to remove insignia of rank and service.

Our patrols encountered no difficulty in their operations.

31, March 1945 - This morning we netted 10 civilian suspects through the vigilance of our patrols. Troop "A" accounted for all ten of those apprehended. Civil Affairs authorities will investigate each one of the individuals picked up and determine proper disposition of each case.

Troops operated Mannheim city patrols throughout this twenty-four hour period without incident. Troop "B" acted as security for the VI Corps Advance Command Post as it moved in.

Many foreign arms, German and those of other nations have been picked up in the ruins of the city and have been turned over to Civil Affairs.

Troops "A" and "B" operated additional patrols to the south and east, reaching Heidelberg, where elements of the 10th Armored Division are holding. These patrols reported to VI Corps Headquarters, the location of the friendly forces on the VI Corps south flank.

News was received that some members of the Squadron who were missing in action New Years Eve 1944-45, had been located in a German hospital when the town of Heppenheim was taken by the 7th Regiment, 3rd Division. A visit to this hospital revealed that at least one of our enlisted men missing in the Bitche action had been treated here, but all but five of the 250 American soldiers who had been in the German hospital were shipped back to England at 0300 hours this morning so the visit failed to contact our men. Conditions in the German hospital were deplorable and there was much evidence that American prisoner-patients had been discriminated against.

#### APRIL 1945

1, April 1945 - The Squadron still maintained security patrols and outposts in the city of Mannheim. Troop "B" was attached to the 35 AAA Brigade in VI Corps, which is charged with security of the Corp's Rear area. It is possible that "B" Troop will remain on that job for two weeks. Over 200 enemy rifles and miscellaneous small arms and much small arms ammunition were discovered cached in a cellar near the "A" Troop CP and were turned over to the Military Authorities. Liaison patrols contacted elements of the 10th Armored Division, the 100th Division and the 63rd Infantry Division.

The German Burgermeister (Mayor) in the village of Rheinau reported that 200 Russians who had constituted a forced labor battalion in that village, were rioting and had set their barracks on fire at 1700. An investigation disclosed no discontent or rioting on the part of the Russians. The barracks had evidently been burned by some Hitler Youth fanatics. The situation was turned over to the Military government for handling. Several Civilian Curfew violators were apprehended by Troop "A" and processed by Military authorities.

2, April 1945 - The security mission in the ruined city of Mannheim on the east bank of the Rhine River was continued today until 1800. This morning, time was advanced one hour for increased daylight use. Troop "C" sent 35 EM and one officer to quell a civil disturbance.

Mobbing civilians were attempting to storm a warehouse in which they believed food to be stored.

At 1800, the Squadron was attached to the 63rd Division for operations and moved, less "C" Troop, through the old historic city of Heidelberg. It had been untouched by our bombers as the Germans had used it as a hospital base. The Troop moved on to a little village about 25 kilometers east of Heidelberg, just north of the Neckar River.

The Troops will move out tomorrow morning at daylight on the mission of maintaining liaison contact with the forward elements of the XX1st Corps on the left and the 254th Infantry Regiment on the right.

#### A short insert from Colonel Samsel's Book on the taking of Heidelberg

"Upon approaching Heidelberg, the Burgermeister, under a large white flag of truce, met me and presented what was called the " Declaration of Heidelberg", an imposing document which simply stated, said that the Town Council had declared Heidelberg an open city. When I inquired if there were any German Troops in the city, he said yes, but he had no control over them. I informed the Burgermeister that the Allies had clearly stated that the only terms acceptable were total unconditional surrender. He was given thirty minutes to deliver this message to the German Commander and display white flags wherever possible.

The German Troops refused, although the civilian population displayed white sheets from every building and home in Heidelberg. It was an unbelievable sight.

The Squadron raced for the bridges and seized two in tact while the other three were blown as the Germans retreated toward the east."

#### We return to the Squadron Daily Reports

3, April 1945 - Today the Troops moved out on the mission of maintaining contact and liaison on the left flank of the VI Corps with elements of the XX1 Corps. The Squadron was attached at 0600 to the 63rd Infantry Division, and Troop "B" was assigned the task of contacting the 101st Cavalry Group on the left. They made that contact 50 kilometers east of Heidelberg and 70 kilometers east of the Rhine River. Troop "A" established contact with the forward elements of the 254th Infantry regiment of the 63rd Division and maintained liaison between their widely scattered battalions by patrol and radio.

The enemy is attempting to set up an organized defense line to our front at present, and has blown all bridges to the east. Observation posts of friendly elements to the south have received flat trajectory fire, and machine gun, small arms and mortar fire have been greeting the forward elements of our sector.

The large industrial city of Nuremberg lies 100 kilometers to the east and will make a lucrative prize for the Allies.

The Squadron moved up this morning from the little town of Aglasterhausen to the village of Mittelschefflenz, ten kilometers east of Mosbach and set up operations after moving the civilians from our section of the village. A semi-blown bridge in town was repaired by civilians during the day at our demand, and a cratered road was filled in, allowing "E" Troop, "F" Company and the Squadron rear to move in.

Great numbers of Russian, Polish, Czech, French and Italian forced laborers are present in the village and have been ordered to stay here to avoid clogging roads until after the front moves further eastward and Military Government authorities can administer to their needs.

4, April 1945 - The Squadron continued on its mission of maintaining contact with the forward elements of the XXI Corps on the left flank and the 63rd division.

Troop "A" operated liaison patrols between elements of the 254th Infantry Regiment and security road patrols in the sector. Troops "A" and "B" out-posted forward areas and reported progress of Infantry elements.

Troop "C" remained on VI Corps' rear area security mission, operating security patrols around vital installations south and east of Mannheim. Several reports from POW and civilian sources concerning the presence of enemy SS Troops in the area were investigated by our patrols and found to be baseless. The enemy is evidently losing his hold on the ridge to our front as his flanks become more threatened and we were able to move another three or four kilometers to the east last night.

5, April 1945 - In continuing to conduct the mission of maintaining contact with elements of the XXI Corps on the left flank, the Squadron employed Troops "A" and "B" in liaison contact, and patrol operations. Troops "A" and "B" also cleared road blocks and informed the 4th Division and the 101st Cavalry Group on XXI Corps advances and situation.

The employment of the Squadron in this flank liaison role has enabled Infantry Division Commanders to obtain rapid accurate information, of their own forward elements and adjacent forces, which could not be possible otherwise. Our powerful radios, and our mobility allows us to keep up to the rapidly changing situation, and information we pass on to higher echelons permits Division and higher commanders to remain abreast of the situation on a broad front, to enable them to make intelligent employment of their forces and prevent duplication of effort.

6, April 1945 - The enemy resistance stiffened today as he fought tenaciously to hold the high ground to the south and east of our forces. The 10th Armored Division threw two combat commands through the 63rd Infantry Division line in an effort to break through while the Infantry contained the dug in enemy. Late in the period elements of CCA, 10th Armored were successful some 20 kilometers to the south and east with the city of Crailsheim as their objective.

Our Troops performed the identical mission as the day before, maintaining contact with the forward elements of the 254th Infantry Regiment and with the XXI Corps on the left. Heavy fighting netted small gains for the foot troops and Troops "A" and "B" remained static, reporting locations and progress of all elements hourly.

Road patrols were operated in the rear areas by Troop's" which is still attached to the 35 AAA Brigade on security mission.

7, April 1945 - After a quiet night during which contact was maintained by Troops "A" and "B" with infantry elements of the XXI Corps and with forward elements of the 254th Infantry Regiment, a new mission for the Squadron was ordered by the CG 63rd Infantry

The left flank and rear of the 63rd Division are to be secured and protected by the Squadron while the Division is engaged in making the crossing of the Jagst River in the vicinity of Krautheim. The Troops are already well disposed to accomplish this mission and no readjustment of positions is necessary. Elements of the Reconnaissance Squadron of the 10th Armored Division are also operating in our sector and they repulsed over 100 enemy attempting to come into the little village of Dortel, on our left, killing 75 and capturing 35 of the German troops with no loss to themselves. Enemy aircraft operated over our sector during the period and dropped two bombs from a jet-propelled aircraft near the Troop "B" CP causing no damage.

Troop "E" and "F" Company supported the forward troops. Troop "C" continued in its rear area security mission.

8, April 1945 - Troops "A" and "B" commenced relief of the Reconnaissance Squadron this morning at 1000 hours and completed the relief shortly after noon to allow the recon. to move to another mission with the 10th Armored. Troops outposted the towns in the sector along the 63rd Division boundary and operated road and bridge reconnaissance patrols. Troop "B" maintained close contact and liaison with 4th Infantry division elements on the left flank.

During the hours of darkness, Troop "A" operated road security patrols as the fluidity of the situation made it very likely that enemy elements might infiltrate and attempt to disrupt communications or threaten our rear.

The enemy personnel against whom we have been operating are stubborn and fanatic fighters. Many of them are Officer Candidates who have been training in this area.

9, April 1945 - This morning the Troops in the line, "A" on the right, and "B" on the left, readjusted their positions to enable them to continue the mission of contact, liaison and security on the left flank of the 63rd Division and still free two platoons to make reconnaissance to the south in conjunction with infantry movements in the sector. The 254th Infantry Regiment attacked south and east but did not cover the entire sector completely. The "A" and "B" platoons reconnoitered south, and both made enemy contact, drawing S/A and A/W fire. The tanks in support of Troop "A's" 1st Platoon fired on enemy dug in positions but failed to dislodge the enemy personnel who had excellent positions on a commanding bluff overlooking the road on which our forces approached. Repeated attempts were made to approach without success, even after directing artillery on the sector. Close patrolling was conducted during the hours of darkness.

Troop "B" directed "E" Troop fire on the enemy positions in the town of Zaisenhausen and succeeded in starting a sizeable

fire in the town. The resistance persisted however, and elements of the 254th Infantry attacked the town late in the afternoon without success. After darkness, the infantry sent a patrol to the town, but it was immediately and forcefully repulsed.

Troop "B" withdrew its 3rd platoon and will start again on the area reconnaissance tomorrow at daylight.

10, April 1945 - The attack by the infantry, supported by the fire of our weapons, broke the pressure of the enemy that he had held in the sector and allowed some sizeable seizures of ground by our forces. Troop "A" proceeded on its axis south, running into pockets of light enemy resistance at small hastily constructed roadblocks, and in the small villages. Fire of the 37mm guns, using HE shells, into the towns caused white flags to appear at the windows of each house.

Troop "B" proceeded east and south in its sector, running into the same type of resistance, and both troops were able to reach their objectives prior to 1800. They outposted the town in the sector and conducted patrols throughout the hours of darkness to maintain contact with each other.

Troop "A" took 65 prisoners during the period. "B" took 49. "E" took 6 and "F" took 5, a Squadron total for the day of 125 POWs. The prisoners were a conglomerate bunch from various types of organizations who had been picked up by the straggler enemy officers and organized to delay in a small sector. They were fighting in isolated groups without higher headquarters supervision in this area and withdrawing generally south with no established destination.

11, April 1945 - While Troop "C" continued to operate security patrols in the VI Corps rear area under the 35 AAA Brigade control, Troops "A" and "B" moved south and east on their mission of maintaining liaison and contact on the left with the 324 RCT of the 44th Division, and on the right with the 254 RCT of the 63rd Division.

Troop "A" removed enemy laid mines from the wooden bridge in its zone of advance, and elements of the Troop were strafed by hostile aircraft, while on the road. An enemy machine which gun opened up on Troop "A's" advancing line was silenced by our artillery.

Troop "B" advanced in its zone without making any contact, finding each town clear of enemy soldiers and the civilians flying white flags from the windows of their homes.

Both "A" and "B" Troops out-posted for the night; establishing good contact between themselves and to the left and right.

42 Prisoners were captured during the day, bringing the total in France and Germany to 3,197.



With 404 POWs taken by the Squadron in the Italian Campaign, this brings the Squadron grand total during all combat up to today to 3601 prisoners, or almost 6 times the Squadron strength.

12, April 1945 - The night of 11 - 12 remained generally quiet and no enemy activity was reported. The enemy has not yet completely recovered from the breaking engagement preceding the withdrawal of the 10th Armored Division from Crailsheim. After daylight, the enemy had assembled sufficient forces to commence his probing of our lines to ascertain our front lines. The 405th Artillery Group has arranged to furnish artillery fire on call, and several points to our front were taken under effective artillery fire in support of our patrols, which were out ascertaining the limits of the enemy advance. Several sharp fire-fights took place and the M24 light tanks again supported the operations of the reconnaissance platoons. Our Air OP was active during daylight and several groups of enemy were taken under effective artillery fire. Prior to darkness, enemy activity to our front appeared to be building up. After darkness, all key RJ and points were harassed by artillery fire.

White flags which had appeared in the town of Bachlingen, were removed by enemy soldiers who reentered the town. Two attempts by "A" Troop to enter town were unsuccessful. Enemy stragglers still continue to wander into our lines. A hospital used by the enemy in Langenbourg was taken together with 45 members of the Wehrmacht, who were patients. Our total POWs for the day were 60.

13, April 1945 - The sector remained relatively quiet during the period. There was a slight readjustment of positions in the "A" and "B" Troop sectors early in the period. Patrols continued to probe forward from the outpost line and four towns were checked and found to be unoccupied. Artillery defensive fires have now been fully coordinated through the 405th Artillery Group and now we have the 141st and 143rd FA in direct support. Displaced persons continue to be a gigantic problem. Enemy, some in civilian clothes, and others in military uniform, were apprehended today.

The enemy continues to appear disorganized and small harassing groups, together with several SPs are his main effort for the time being. These may only be a part of his forces, the other may be establishing defensive positions further to the southeast. The population seems to be unconcerned regarding our occupation and to date have proven no problem whatsoever.

14, April 1945 - The Squadron maintained contact and liaison with elements of the XXI Corps on the left and the 254th RCT on the right. Troop "C" remained attached to the 35 AAA Brigade, performing rear area security operations in VI Corps. The situation on our front remained comparatively quiet throughout the period. The enemy is completely disorganized and all their actions are merely small harassing parties.

15, April 1945 - The mission of the Squadron changed slightly and the boundaries on our right and left changed. The Reconnaissance Troop of 63rd Infantry Division, was attached to the Squadron effective 1200. They were assembled in an area in the vicinity of Raboldhausen for the day, and at 1800, commenced the relief of Troop "B" at its forward positions, the relief being completed at 2000 hours.

Our activity during the day flared up with sporadic enemy reaction, particularly on our left flank, where an estimated 150 enemy dug in on high ground, harassed our Troops trying to enter Blaubach and when we attempted to drive them out of their positions, they held on tenaciously. They continued to hold this ground during the period and at the close of the period were throwing some very accurate fire into "B" Troop positions. With the aid of several SPs and heavy mortars in their rear, they forced one platoon of "B" Troop to withdraw. Troop "A" advanced well early in the period, but started to meet heavy enemy resistance in the form of accurately placed SP and mortar fire, which continued almost to the end of the period.

The elements of the Squadron advanced all along the front on an average of three kilometers. A new enemy defense line had now been encountered. His initial defense of the new line was well supported by both SP and mortar fire. Our artillery took its toll of these weapons and knocked several of them out.

The two light and one medium battalions of artillery supporting our advance put down a hail of fire on all known enemy positions, in preparation for tomorrow's continued advance. During all of today's operations, no casualties were suffered and 5 POWs were taken.

16, April 1945 - The general condition on our front continues to remain the same. Enemy resistance continues. Particularly on our left flank, where he is dug in on the high ground. In this sector, the Infantry attack is exerting strong pressure on the enemy, but progress is slow. Enemy mortar and artillery fire increased slightly over the previous period, with main approaches to the south covered with accurately placed artillery fire. Our Air OP located enemy groups of personnel and vehicles moving south, and directed artillery on these targets with good results. Contact on our left was maintained with elements of the 324th RCT. The 63rd Recon, Troop, now working with the Squadron, met stiff resistance and showed little progress at the end of the period. Troop "B" relieved Troop "C" in performing rear area security patrols for VI Corps and the 35 AAA Brigade. The weather remained clear and visibility was good throughout the period.

17, April 1945 - Troop "A" continued to encounter stiff resistance and heavy fire from enemy dug in along the high ground vicinity 585-715 and 588-725. The enemy used Nebelwerfers extensively and covered three large areas with this fire. It appears that the enemy is determined to delay, as long as possible, along this high ground before moving back to the high ground south of the river. On our left flank, the Infantry attacking Brittenfeld, 66-78, met stiff opposition and were unable to take their objective. Our supporting artillery continued to be very effective, and our Air OP had a field day shooting up enemy vehicles and personnel.

18, April 1945 - Troop "C" completed the relief of "A" Troop at 0900 and "A" Troop reverted to Squadron reserve. The demolitions performed by the enemy on bridges of all types had decreased the pace of our advance considerably. The 63rd Reconnaissance Troop met a determined enemy, in the vicinity of Brittenfeld, 66-76. In the center of the zone, "C" Troop forded the river and entered Beinbach,, 63-74 and continued its advance south against a rapidly withdrawing enemy, offering only slight and sporadic resistance to our advance. Our right flank remains the most difficult to advance in. The approaches to the river, wherever bridges are blown are getting steep. By-passes have been few. The 1st Battalion of the 255th Infantry attacked through our elements on the right flank, and moving cross- country, were able to cleanup the light resistance they met without any difficulty. At the close of the period, straggler POWs were being picked up by "C" Troop. The 141st FA was relieved from direct support as of 1906 hours.

19, April 1945 - Troop "A" remained in Squadron reserve, with Troop "C" and the 63rd Reconnaissance troop continuing aggressive reconnaissance in their sectors. Enemy resistance increased slightly, and increased use of Nebelwerfers was noticeable throughout the Squadron sector. Enemy bridge demolition was well planned and the progress of all elements was delayed. Several enemy were located in the rear of "E" Troop positions and engaged a small "E" Troop patrol in a sharp fire fight. They were routed by several of our light tanks. At the close of the period, all Troops and Squadron Headquarters with the exception of Troop "C" were en route to the Heilbron area, in preparation to taking over the right flank of the 100th Division. Troop "C" encountered some difficulty in disengaging from the enemy and it was not until just prior to daylight that they closed into our new assigned area.

20, April 1945 - The Squadron relieved the Provisional Reconnaissance Squadron on the right flank of the 100th Division and established a new line, with Troop "A" on the right and Troop "C" on the left. Orders were received shortly after daylight to push out aggressively, reconnoitering in our sector. Elements of the 399th RCT on our left had very light contact with the enemy. Both Troops moved forward aggressively, encountering well- planned and extensive enemy demolitions, both in bridges blown and trees felled. Bypasses were few and difficult to negotiate.

No enemy contact was encountered during the period, but mines caused one casualty.

Our liaison and contact on the right was maintained by the 100th Division.

21, April 1945 - The enemy has definitely broken contact all along our front and had covered his withdrawal with demolitions and mines. Civilians were used to construct several bridges and our advance continued moving forward 10 kilometers along the entire front. The advance seems small, considering the lack of enemy contact and resistance, but caution is required because of his carefully planted mines and the delay caused by his bridge demolitions. Engineers are not available for the extensive bridging in our sector since they are being used on the Division and RCT MSR.

Our Air OP has been flying horse-fly missions and we therefore lacked a very helpful source of information. At the close of the period, the CG, 100th Division ordered that we push well out in front of our reported locations and reach a newly designated line before dark. The Troops were forced to move out of their sectors in order to by-pass impassable roads. The additional difficulties imposed by cold driving rain, which reduced visibility to zero, further slowed down our progress.

22, April 1945 - Enemy resistance in the sector in front of us collapsed today. Large advances were made in our sector and on our right and left. The French were first to enter Stuttgart, but elements of Troop "C" were in the outskirts of Stuttgart at 0900. Bridges were blown throughout the sector by the enemy, and our Troops did not cross the Neckar River. A large bag of prisoners was counted by our Troops. Several hospitals filled with enemy were also overrun. A grand total of 1038 POWs were taken during the last 24 hours.

Our sector is by no means flushed of the enemy, since many pockets were by-passed because of blown bridges and mines. The task of covering every bit of the area will be difficult without some engineering assistance.

The Squadron CP moved cross-country today, the slick mud and steep grades imposed real problems with all our trailers and vehicles. The TD Reconnaissance Company, reinforced, was attached to the 397th Infantry effective 1700. At the close of the period all Troops were closed in and out-posted their area for the night. No enemy activity reported during the night. 23, April 1945 - With the collapse of enemy resistance in the Stuttgart area, there remained only mopping up operations in isolated areas previously by-passed during our rapid advances. The mission of flushing all woods and towns previously by-passed in the 100th Division sector was assigned to the 398 RCT, 117th Cavalry attached. We were assigned an 8 to 10 km front extending from the Rems River north 15 and south 10 kilometers.

Troop "A" was assigned the northern sector and Troop "C" the southern sector. Reconnaissance sections were dispatched to pre-arranged locations and operations started. A change in mission at 1200 detached the 117th Cavalry from the 100th Division and attached it to the 103rd Division. Elements of the Squadron commenced movement to the new assembly area, vicinity of MetzingerRX14-94 at 1700. The Troops started closing in at 2030. Troop "C" prepared to commence a new mission at 0630.

24, April 1945 - The Squadron maintained contact and liaison between elements of the 411 RCT on the left and II French Corps on the right. Disorganized and scattered resistance was met during our advance and many prisoners were taken. Our Troops out-posted their area during the night without incident.

25, April 1945 - The Squadron remained attached to the 103rd Infantry Division. Troops maintained contact with elements to the II French Corps. A light screening force was maintained to the east and south while all elements of the Division assembled for a push south through Ulm. POW tolls rise rapidly as small groups of enemy are rounded up in the hills. There were a few exchanges of shots but no large engagements ensued.

At the close of the period, the Squadron was relieved from attachment to the 103rd and attached to the 44th Division.

26, April 1945 - The Squadron remained disposed the same, but early in the period, orders were received to relieve elements of the Recon Co., of the 776 TD Battalion far to the south. Troop "A" made the move during darkness, and by daylight the relief was completed.

The POW total mounted rapidly, as enemy in groups of 10 to 20 walked into our lines and surrendered. They became a problem insofar as transportation was concerned. The Troops continued to patrol the right flank of the 44th Division without incident. Contact was made with elements of the 1st French Army on our right. The enemy has apparently completely withdrawn from this area with his principal fighting troops and has left only small groups to harass our elements.

27, April 1945 - Our troops continue to maintain contact and liaison with elements of 1 DB French of I French Corps on the right and the 103rd Division on the left.

There was no enemy resistance encountered in our operations during the period. Scattered groups of enemy continue to surrender to our patrols. All elements had moved south of the Danube River by 1200. Patrols operating along the flanks and through the woods uncovered a total of 24 enemy Heinkel 111 planes, all in good condition. All the instruments had been removed from the planes by the enemy.

28, April 1945 - Our work with the 44th Division continues as the Infantry advances south toward the Austrian border. Our Troops maintained a screen on the right flank of the Division, protecting the right and rear. No enemy action was reported by the Troops, and another large POW toll was registered, as large numbers of the enemy approach our patrols and surrender. As we approach the mountains, the temperature of the air is becoming colder. Troop "B" remains attached to the 35 AAA Brigade performing rear area security patrol duties. Our tanks and Artillery have hardly fired a shot in support of our forward elements during the past 5 days, although our tanks covered woods in our sector with MG fire and HE shells.

29, April 1945 - The Squadron remained attached to the 44th Division and continued to maintain contact and liaison with elements of CC2 of 1 DB, I French Corps. Our troops with the 44th Reconnaissance Troop attached, continued to outpost and patrol the right flank of the Division sector. No enemy resistance was encountered, but enemy stragglers continue to turn themselves in to our Troops. The weather, which has been rather temperate, became cool, with strong winds and light snow flurries after dark. The terrain too is becoming slightly more hilly as we near the mountains at the Austrian border.

Plans for relief of Troop "B", now attached to the rear performing rear area security patrols, by Troop "A" have commenced.

30 April 1945 - The Squadron remained attached to the 44th Division and elements of the Squadron continue to patrol the rear of the Division, maintaining contact with elements of French Corps on the right and elements of 114 RCT on the left. Elements of Troop "A" patrolled their sector, which included a zone within the borders of Austria. The weather was cold and snow flurries prevailed during the period. POW stragglers continued to turn themselves in and the count is mounting steadily.

1, May 1945 - The Squadron was relieved of attachment to the 44th Division and assembled preparatory to moving to a new assembly area.

Upon closing into our new assembly area, our troops commenced patrolling the area, rounding up stragglers and assembling displaced persons in nearby communities to keep them clear of the MSR. The weather has become colder and light snow flurries prevailed during the period.

2, May 1945 - The Squadron was attached to the 101st Airborne Division. Elements of the Squadron continued patrolling in their assigned sectors. Many more POWs wandering along the roads were picked up.

Displaced persons remained a big problem, with large numbers of these people traveling along the main roads. The weather is crisp. Several inches of snow fell during the night.

3, May 1945 - The Squadron was relieved from its attachment to the 101st Airborne Division and attached to the 115th Cavalry Group. The mission continued the same with new boundaries extending the sector.

4, May 1945 - The Troops continued their present mission of maintaining roadblocks and operating security patrols in our sector. The flow of POWs and displaced persons continues heavy. The present mission has given Troop commanders an opportunity to catch up on some much needed motor maintenance.

5, May 1945 - All elements of the Squadron continued to operate security patrols in their sectors and maintain road-blocks at key points. The flow of POWs has nearly ceased, but displaced persons continue to move and jam the roads in all directions. At 1200 hours all elements of the Squadron were assembled. The Squadron was relieved of attachment to the 115th Cavalry Group and attached to the 44th Division. The Squadron closed into a new assembly area in the vicinity of Reutte, Austria at 1700 hours. No mission was given, and the Troops bedded down for the night. During the night, radio reports indicated a cease-fire order for all 7th Army Troops.

6, May 1945 - All elements of the Squadron closed in to assigned sectors and commenced operation of patrols and maintenance of road blocks in assigned areas. Orders were to apprehend POWs and prevent traveling of displaced persons.

7, May 1945 - Troops maintained roadblocks and operated security patrols in their sectors. Troop "A" commenced 4 days of intensive motor maintenance. All Troops are improving maintenance on their vehicles.

#### May 8, 1945 - VE Day - Victory in Europe

8, May 1945 - Security patrols were operated and roadblocks were maintained in our sector. Troop "A" is in the second day of an intensive motor and radio maintenance program. One platoon of Troop "C" participated in a rehearsal for the VE day

Parade to be conducted by the 44th Division and attached units for Major General Brooks. The Squadron Commanding Officer had a meeting of all Troop Commanders and they were acquainted with the details of a training program to be undertaken at an early date.

9, May 1945 - The Troops garrisoned towns in their sectors and maintained roadblocks and operated security patrols. Troop "A" continues its intensive motor and radio maintenance program with the other Troops doing as much maintenance as possible. "C" Troop was located in the little village of Haselgehr.

10, May 1945 - Troop "A" completed its intensive radio and motor maintenance program at Squadron rear and tomorrow will relieve troop "B". Troop "E" and "F" Company continued their maintenance programs at their present locations. Troop "B" and Troop "C" continued to operate roadblocks and patrols throughout the main axis of our sector. The Squadron CP remained at Wissembach.

11, May 1945 - "A" Troop relieved "B" Troop in its sector, taking over its road blocks and security patrols while "B" Troop moved to the rear for a period of intensive motor and radio maintenance.

The Squadron moved to Holzgau into a very comfortable CP.

"Tampico" was the name of the movie shown to personnel of all Troops. The weather continued beautiful and all ranks spent happy hours adding up their points toward demobilization.

All Troops are now comfortably quartered and each have suitable training areas close by. Training schedules from each Troop outline the training program for the coming week, starting with a light program and gradually working into small unit problems.

12, May 1945 - "A" and "C" Troops maintained their road- blocks and security patrols while "B", "E" and "F" continued in Squadron reserve, conducting radio and vehicle maintenance programs.

A movie, "Two Down and One to Go", was shown to all Troops, dealing with the continuation of the war with Japan and the immediate prospects of demobilization on the point system. It either cheered or depressed those who saw it depending on their point totals and their attitude towards the "Surplus Pool". Details for church services have been completed for tomorrow.

13, May 1945 - Troop "B" continued organized radio and motor maintenance at the Squadron rear in Durach. Troop "C" continued to maintain road blocks at Steeg and operated security patrols in its sector. Troop "A" maintained roadblocks and operated patrols in its sector. Troop "E" and Company "F" continued motor and radio maintenance. The Squadron CP remained at Holzgau. Many interesting personalities of the Nazi Party are being apprehended in the nearby hills. Orders were received, late this evening stating that the Squadron was to be relieved by the 114th Infantry Regiment within several days.

14, May 1945 - Troop "B" continued to do radio and motor maintenance and will not relieve Troop "C" as we are assembling within a day or so for movement out of the Division area. Troops "A" and "C" continued to maintain roadblocks and security patrols in their sectors. Troop "E" and Company "F" attended to final details on their maintenance and disposed of their excess ammunition.

Elements of the 2nd Battalion, 114th Infantry Regiment made a reconnaissance of our area prior to relieving Troops "A" and "C" on roadblocks and security patrols in the morning. The Squadron CP remained at Holzgau.

Our new mission will be security for SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force in case you've forgotten) and plans are being made for our movement to Frankfurt. The Squadron was asked for by name by SHAEF and many of our former friends who worked with us at AFHQ in Algiers are, no doubt, responsible for our being called back.

15, May, 1945 - The plans for our movement to Frankfurt have been completed. The Squadron will move in two serials, HQ, A, and B in the first, and C, E, F and the Squadron rear echelon in the second serial. The axis of march will be Kempton, Ulm, Goppingen, Stuttgart, Pforzheim, Karlsruhe, Mannheim and Frankfurt; a total of 314 miles.

16 May 1945 - Major Brown Left for Frankfurt with the advanced parties from each Troop. Troop "A" departed for Rheims at 0915 hours to commence a special mission for SHAEF. All other Troops continued making final preparations for commencing movement to Frankfurt in the morning. Troop "E" and Company "F" moved to Durach. Colonel Samsel went to VI Corps this PM to say good-by to the corps Commander and others on his Staff.

17, May 1945 - Our movement to Frankfurt started at 0545. Headquarters Troop leading, followed by B, C, E, F and the Squadron rear.

The convoy refueled at Ulm and proceeded without incident toward Pforzheim, the assembly area for the night. All Troops were closed in by 2200 hours. One light tank dropped out of the convoy because of a mechanical failure. All other vehicles moved along well, with the exception of a few flat tires and incidental breakdowns.

18, May 1945 - After a good nights rest, the first serial resumed the movement to Frankfurt. Headquarters moved out at 0700 followed by B, C, E, F, and Squadron rear. The convoy reached and refueled at

Mannheim. Troops closed in 5 km south of Frankfurt beginning at 1230 hours. Guides were waiting for the troops, and as they arrived, the guide brought them directly to the assembly area. Company "F" was the last to close in, and they were closed at 1730 hours. Troops immediately attended to the details of making the men comfortable for the night and cleaning the area to be occupied.

-So endeth the record of Squadron Daily Reports in our possession-

(The following information about our occupation in Austria and Frankfurt is drawn from Col. Samsel's Book. I have taken the liberty of condensing the story, but the factual content is true to his authorship.)

On the 9th of May 1945, while nestled in the Lech Valley midst the snow capped Austrian Alps and some of the finest Ski resorts in the world, the Squadron was assigned what was probably its best mission of the entire war, and the Colonel was appointed Civil Military Governor of the Valley with orders to round up all stragglers and displaced persons (DP) and turn them over to Prisoner of War Camps or other appropriate authorities.

It was a magnificent setting. There was a single road that ran the length of the Valley with little villages on either side about 15 miles apart. It was here that in each Village, the people were asked to let us know when any soldiers, coming in out of the hills, wished to surrender. In that way, as word got around, small groups came in on their own to be transported to Prisoner of War Camps in our daily truck shuttle.

Those days were pleasant indeed. We took over 22 Hotels and some Boarding Houses in order to provide every soldier with housing and a bed with clean sheets and blankets. The Villager welcomed us and the "Non-fraternization" rules were stretched to the limit.

The first Saturday in the Valley, the entire Squadron held their Victory Party to celebrate the end of the long road to that final goal. It was a party never to be forgotten with entertainment from a Russian U.S.O. Troupe of outstanding talented stars.

Four truckloads of liquor, which we had stashed away in Stuttgart, were brought in for the party. At the stroke of midnight, Colonel Samsel proposed a toast to the valiant men of the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, followed by another to our Fallen Comrades who were not with us on this memorable evening. Then, typically, in keeping with an old "Essex Troop Tradition", and without a word from the Colonel, every glass was smashed in thoughtful respect for those resting in Valhalla.

Of course, like all good things, three weeks of this idyllic rest period was all we were to enjoy.

On May 24th orders were received for the Squadron to report to Frankfurt, Germany to serve, once again, as the Personal Security Force for General Eisenhower.

"SHAEF", Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force, had been set up in the I.G. Farben Headquarters Building in Frankfurt and a security force was essential during the first critical weeks of the Allied Occupation.

Colonel Samsel was appointed Military Governor for the entire Perimeter Region.

Squadron Headquarters and the various Troop Headquarters were set up in several of the small towns in the area and the units quickly implemented Perimeter Patrol Duty around Frankfurt. (Locations of the Squadron Headquarters and Troops are listed below.)

In addition, once a week, the entire Squadron conducted a fully combat loaded road march; a show of force to impress the local population.

During the course of our service there, no major incident ever arose.

As the summer wore on, the men of the 117th who had been with the organization longest, gradually received their orders to return to the U.S. for their well-earned discharge from the service.

The Squadron remained in Germany throughout the summer and fall and was finally deactivated on November 25, 1945.

- Towns in the Frankfurt area where Troops were quartered -

Headquarters Troop	Ober Ehrlenbach
Service Troop	Ober Ehrlenbach
"A" Troop	Bad Homburg
"B" Troop	Ober Leiderbach
"C" Troop	Nieder Ehrlenbach
"E" Troop	Bad Hochstadt
"F" Company	Bad Hochstadt

Medical Detachment - The Officers & Staff were at HQ. The men were assigned to the Troops.

*117<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron World War II Campaigns*

North Africa  
Rome/Arno  
Southern France – w/Arrowhead  
Alsace  
Rhineland  
Central Germany