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AFTER ACTION REPORT

85TH CAV RGN SO MECZ

5TH ARMORED DIVISION

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5TH ARMORED DIVISION

AUGUST THRU DECEMBER 1944

FEBRUARY THRU APRIL 1945

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SUBJECT: Report, Army Ground Forces Board - MTO

Number A-366

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George C. Bessinger
Major General

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ARMY GROUND FORCES BOARD
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OPERATIONS OF THE 85TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE TROOP,
MECHANIZED, IN THE ITALIAN THEATER

(Reported by Col. T. Q. Donaldson, Jr., Cav.)

(OBSERVER'S NOTE:

1. The following report on Operations in the Italian Theater of the 85th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop, Mechanized, of the 85th Infantry Division, II Corps, was prepared by Captain R. B. Thompson, Cavalry, the Troop Commander.

2. From the attached report it may readily be seen that this Troop has been employed in accordance with the principles and teachings of the Cavalry School.

3. The Army Ground Forces Board Observer, Colonel T. Q. Donaldson, Jr., Cavalry, upon visiting this unit was particularly impressed by the fact that the Division Commander personally directs the employment of this Troop, and insists that it be ready, on call, to perform its primary mission.)

"EIGHTY FIFTH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE TROOP, MECZ.

APO 85, U. S. Army.
5 March 1945.

REPORT OF OPERATIONS

On May 11, 1944 the 85th Reconnaissance Troop was employed on the left flank of the 85th Division, with the mission of providing security for the Division along the Tyrrhenian seacoast, from the mouth of the Garigliano River to a point 4.2 miles south of the river. The mission was carried out by organizing nine strong points along the seacoast, each being manned by four men, equipped with light machine guns, grenades and signal flares. Each post was equipped with a phone. In addition foot patrols covered the entire sector during the hours of darkness. Three platoons were used in this operation, three strong points being assigned to each platoon. Headquarters platoon was organized as a reserve.

During the period 11 April 1944 and 19 May 1944, approximately 400 rounds of 88 MM, 150 MM and 170 MM artillery fell in the troop sector. This shelling was sufficient to impress upon the men the necessity for "digging in", as they were taught to do in training. No casualties were suffered during this period. Alertness was constantly stressed, as

refugees from the heavily shelled towns of Formia and Gaeta were landing in small boats daily. It was known that German agents often disguised themselves as refugees. A total of 83 people were apprehended during this period. All were turned over to CIC, 85th Division.

On May 12th, the day following the attack by the 5th and 8th Armies, the Commanding General, 85th Division, called for a plan to employ the armored cars of the troop to provide communication between Division and Regimental CP's. Five vehicles were used for this purpose. The SCR 193 radio gave excellent results, however it was evident as a result of this mission, that more emphasis on radio security, especially in voice transmission must be stressed. It was also learned that strict adherence to radio procedure as prescribed in current training publications, improved speed and clarity of radio traffic.

On May 16th a warning order was received, the Troop was made ready to move on 2 hours notice, the next day the 1st Platoon was attached to a task force, consisting of the 2nd Battalion 337th Infantry Regiment, a battery of armored field artillery and a company of tanks. This force assembled near Scauri, Italy, with the mission of pursuing the enemy to the north along route #7. On May 18th the task force moved out on the mission. Later the same day the troop minus the 1st Platoon was ordered to move to Formia, Italy. This move was accomplished by 2200, and orders were received to "mop up", the town of Gaeta on the following day. At 2245, a message from the 1st Platoon (attached task force) reported enemy contact north of Itri, Italy, contact was soon broken by the enemy, and the unit continued their advance on highway #7, reaching the town of Fondi, by the early morning of May 19th.

On 20 May 1944 the following missions were assigned (1) to enter and "mop up", Gaeta, Italy, a peninsular town which was by-passed by our main forces, (2) to reconnoiter the coastal town and roads leading to Sperlonga, Italy. The 3rd Platoon entered Gaeta at 0800, found no enemy in the town but several mine fields and many booby traps. A section of Headquarters Platoon was assigned to report the locations of these demolitions to the 310th Engineers and the 3rd Platoon was moved to the town of Sperlonga. The 2nd Platoon was given the mission of reconnoitering the road net between Gaeta and Sperlonga, south of highway #7. At 0230 a radio message was received from the 1st Platoon (task force) stating that a fire fight was in progress near a bridge, seven miles north of Fondi, Italy on highway #7. Leaving the executive officer in charge of the Troop, a visit to the 1st Platoon disclosed that the platoon leader had been seriously wounded and 4 enlisted men slightly wounded. The contested bridge which was wired for demolitions by the enemy, had been saved, and our tanks and armored cars were crossing it. The details of the fire fight were interesting because it brought out a point so often stressed in training. That of covering fire from the armored vehicles, for the jeeps working in front. In this instance the point jeep moved through a mine field, cleared only wide enough for this type of vehicle. The armored car crews were compelled to halt, dismount, and widen the passage way. Failing to halt long enough for their support, the point moved forward and seized the bridge. This group came under mortar and machine gun fire, and they were "pinned down" in the

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ditches on each side of the road for about 30 minutes. The first armored vehicle to cross the mine field opened fire on the enemy with 37 MM HE and machine guns, causing the enemy to withdraw, and wounding several. This vehicle used its radio to call for artillery fire which also caused casualties. Had this fire support been in proper position, casualties might have been avoided. The platoon leader was awarded the Silver Star for moving forward under fire to remove demolitions from the bridge.

On the 21st of May the 2nd and 3rd Platoons having completed their assigned missions, were moved to Fondi, Italy. On 22nd May the 1st Platoon was relieved from the task force and reverted to troop control. At 1300, 22nd May the Troop was assigned the mission of relieving "B" Company 338th Infantry, who were in position at (402065). This position faced the railway tunnel leading through the mountains north of Terracina, Italy, to the Pontine Marshes. The tunnel was an escape route for enemy groups cut off in the hills by the rapid advance of our infantry through the mountains. The mission of the Troop was to deny use of this tunnel to the enemy. On 23rd of May, a group of enemy was sighted and brought under fire, four enemy soldiers were captured and the remainder dispersed. On 24th of May, combat patrols were sent out to contact enemy; one wounded enemy soldier was found and evacuated.

On 25th of May the Troop was relieved of its mission, and ordered to move to the vicinity of Priverno, Italy. One platoon was detached to escort the Division Headquarters to its new location; on completion of the move to return to troop control. The move was carried out on 26th of May 1944. The movement of vehicles at this time was exceedingly difficult as all traffic was funneled through Terracina. The rapid advance of our division was far ahead of engineer repair units which made the use of by-passes necessary. The enormous amount of traffic on highway #7 also complicated repairing of roads.

At 0100, 27th of May, in complete black-out the Troop reached its bivouac area near Priverno, Italy. During the afternoon, the mission of contacting the right Battalion of the 339th Infantry was received from the Commanding General, 85th Division. This contact was to be made on the 28th of May. At 0130 artillery of medium calibre began to fall in the troop area. By 0300 approximately 150 rounds had been received, killing two men and wounding four others. The vehicles received no direct hits but tires, radiators, and gas tanks of fifteen general service vehicles were in need of repair. The morning of May 28th the 1st Platoon moved out to contact the 339th Infantry Regiment; the remainder of the Troop rested and repaired damage of the preceding night.

On 29th of May 1944, Troop moved to Subaudia, Italy for re-equipment and maintenance of vehicles.

The 30th of May 1944, the 85th Division moved back into the line north of Cori, Italy. The Troop was given the mission of protecting the exposed Division right flank by occupying two prominent peaks west of the town of Rocca Massina, Mt. Pratiglio and Mt. Rinsauto. The terrain was typical of the mountains of Italy, inaccessible to all but dismounted troops and mule trains. The 1st and 2nd Platoons were assigned the mission of scaling these

peaks and establishing observation posts on the summits. This move from Subaudia and the establishment of these outposts was accomplished by early morning of 31st of May 1944. Troop command post was located near the town of Rocca Massina, Italy. June 1st was spent in patrolling the area of Mt. Pratiglio and Mt. Rinsauto. At 1300 the Commanding General, 85th Division, sent a radio message for the Troop Commander to report immediately. At this time it was advised that the Troop be ready to move rapidly up Via Casilina in case a breakthrough of present enemy defenses was effected. A thorough terrain study was made and the following plan adopted. (1) Troop to be assembled in vicinity of Division command post (008515), all vehicles to be fueled, weapons checked and men thoroughly oriented on the situation. (2) Troop Commander and one platoon leader to contact C. O., of C. T. 9, to coordinate movement through this unit.

The Troop was assembled near the Division command post on the night of June 1st. June 3rd, the order to move was received. The 2nd and 3rd Platoons were ordered to move up Via Casilina, while Headquarters Platoon and the 1st Platoon moved up a secondary lateral route.

At 1600 the 3rd Platoon moving up Via Casilina reported enemy contact. Four friendly tank destroyers were surrounded by dismounted enemy at road junction (952543). The platoon leader of 3rd Platoon observed one of the destroyers catch fire and explode from an enemy grenade. Shortly afterward the point squad operating dismounted reported the location of 12 to 15 enemy soldiers 600 yards northeast of cross roads. The platoon leader decided to dismount the scout section, use the plentiful concealment for these men to advance ahead of the armored cars. This plan succeeded. The dismounted men advanced to within 200 yards of the enemy group who were pinned down by fire from the armored vehicles. In a quick attack the entire group was taken prisoner with no casualties on either side. The platoon leader paused only long enough to write a message concerning this action and to bring his jeeps forward for replenishment of ammunition. The advance was then continued. After advancing some 1400 or 1500 yards the point drew enemy rifle and machine gun fire from a ridge directly to their front. The platoon leader moved forward to locate the direction of this fire, but due to almost perfect camouflage could not locate the enemy positions. The scout section was then deployed to advance by rushing until halted by enemy fire. By this method they were able to advance within 200 yards of the ridge from which the fire was coming, during this period the armored vehicles were in a covered position, with machine guns dismounted covering the advance of the scout sections. The scout sergeant on locating the enemy machine gun, fired tracer bullets into their positions, thus making targets for the armored car crews. The armored sections fired 30 rounds of HE into the German positions and raked the hill with machine gun fire. Shortly afterward a white flag appeared and 18 German soldiers surrendered. The scout sections then moved quickly to the top of the ridge, where a group of enemy was observed retreating to the north. They were brought under small arms fire and a messenger sent back to the armored cars. Upon receipt of this message two armored cars moved forward and opened fire on the enemy causing casualties and capturing 22 more prisoners.

By this time the platoon leader of the 2nd Platoon had joined the 3rd Platoon leader and was familiar with the situation. The 2nd Platoon took charge of the prisoners and gave protection to the 3rd Platoon while prisoners

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and casualties were evacuated. While reorganizing the platoon and preparing to resume the advance, sniper fire and several bursts of machine pistol fire were received from a woods about 600 yards to the east of Via Casilina. Instead of employing a dismounted unit to enter the woods, artillery fire was requested through the attached artillery officer. Fire was directed on the woods and ridge for approximately ten minutes; when the fire was lifted six enemy soldiers surrendered. A patrol was then sent into the woods and reported 19 enemy dead. The advance was then resumed toward the town of Monte Compatri. Patrols sent forward to enter the town drew sniper fire, and were forced to withdraw. A second attempt made from the flank was successful, 6 enemy were captured and 4 were killed. After moving through Monte Compatri, enemy resistance was negligible but blown bridges and mines delayed the advance considerably. Mine warfare which had been stressed during training in Africa was of utmost value here. Twenty-eight Teller mines were removed from a possible by-pass of a bridge linking Via Casilina and highway #6 by the 2nd Platoon.

On June 4th at 0800 the 2nd and 3rd Platoons moved up highway #6. At 1300 hours they were in the outskirts of Rome. At this point enemy self-propelled and anti-tank guns engaged the 2nd Platoon and delayed their advance. Friendly tanks and tank destroyers arrived to engage the enemy. At 1100 hours orders were received by radio to attach the 1st Platoon to a pursuit force from the 338th Infantry Regiment and to establish a counter reconnaissance screen along the southern outskirts of Rome; this screen to protect our infantry units who were engaged in a wheeling movement to the south to cut off retreating enemy in that sector. The screen was established at 1300 and remained in position that afternoon and during the night. On the morning of June 5th the 1st Platoon moved into Rome and secured a bridge over the Tiber River for the crossing of the 2nd Battalion of the 338th Infantry Regiment. Also on June the 5th, the 2nd Platoon was attached to the 339th Infantry Regiment to execute reconnaissance for that unit northward. The 2nd Platoon moved out on this mission at 1500 hours. The 3rd Platoon was sent to Division Headquarters to escort and guard movement of Division Headquarters.

On June 6th the Troop command post moved to vicinity of Arsiccio, Italy, two miles north of Rome on highway #2. The day was spent in visiting attached platoons, and improving communications. At this time the advance of forward units was very rapid and the use of platoon radios (SCR 193) were being used extensively for communication between regiments and Division. Some difficulties were experienced due to use of codes within units. The Commanding General prescribed a code for use by all units which helped considerably. During the night of June 6th the Troop command post drew sniper fire. The fire was returned by Headquarters Platoon armored vehicles but no prisoners were captured. The 7th and 8th of June were comparatively quiet. The 2nd Platoon moved without opposition to the shores of Lake Bracciano, where it was ordered into bivouac by Commanding Officer of 339th Infantry Regiment. At 1000 the 1st Platoon reported enemy contact two miles south of Monterosi. The platoon reported 25 rounds of 120 MM mortar fire. The platoon leader requested artillery fire on the enemy positions. The first three rounds fell on the first platoon positions but the fire was quickly adjusted and caused the enemy to withdraw. The 1st Platoon entered Monterosi at 1700 hours.

On June 9th the Troop command post and maintenance section moved to an

area two miles north of Monterosi, Italy. From this point all three platoons were re-supplied and their vehicles checked over by the maintenance section. The 11th of June word was received that the 85th Division was to be relieved by French troops and was to move to a rest area south of Rome, Italy. The 12th of June was spent in preparation for this move and on the 13th the Troop moved in three march groups to Castel Porziano, Italy. From June 14th through July 11th the training of replacements, correction of deficiencies noted in combat and re-equipping of troops was stressed. During this period enlisted men of the organization were awarded two Silver Stars and fourteen Bronze Star Medals in appropriate ceremonies.

On July 11th 1944, the Troop received orders to move to vicinity of Montemassi, Italy. The night of July 11th and 12th the move was made. The route taken was highway #1. A distance of 145 miles was covered and a bivouac established the morning of July 12th. At 1830 a message was received stating that twenty enemy soldiers by-passed in the hills by our troops had appeared in the village of Caldeona. The 2nd Platoon was sent to investigate this situation, but found that the enemy had been dispersed by partisan groups. The platoon then returned to the Troop area.

The next four days were spent in training, with emphasis on physical hardening and a review of scouting and patrolling. During this period the men were familiarized with the basic principles of mountain climbing by an officer who attended the 5th Army school on mountain warfare. The use of ropes in scaling cliffs in the supply of ammunition to mountain positions was emphasized.

An enemy threat northeast of Volterra, Italy resulted in Troop being attached to 339th Infantry Regiment C. T., on July 17th 1944. The combat team moved to an area 3 miles north of Volterra, Italy, arriving at 1100 hours. During the afternoon of July 17th, a reconnaissance of roads in the sector was conducted and the Troop was made ready for combat mission. The enemy threat did not develop however, so on July 18th 1944, the Troop was ordered to rejoin the Division in the vicinity of Rosignano, Italy. On the nights of July 18th and 19th this move was made and completed. Training was resumed in the Rosignano area which lasted through the month of July. On August 4th, the Troop moved as part of the 85th Division to a bivouac in the vicinity of Camporbiano, Italy. Training was resumed here until August 14th. On August 15th the 85th Division moved north to the high ground overlooking the Arno River, to relieve elements of the 91st Division. Initially the Troop was attached to the 337th Infantry Regiment, regimental combat team. The commanding officer of 337th directed that a protective screen be set up to protect the movement into position and relief of elements of 91st Division by 337th combat team. This mission was accomplished by placing armored sections in covered positions, to cover all possible approaches by enemy vehicles. The scout sections were spread thinly over the mountainous terrain and equipped with SCR 536 radios. By careful selection of observation posts the entire regimental sector was covered. The relief took place without incident, although enemy harassing fire caused some minor changes in selections of routes to the positions. Upon completion of the relief on August 19th the Troop was assembled near Ginestra, Italy. The Troop was then relieved of attachment to the 337th combat team and assigned a defensive position in the sector of the 339th combat team in the vicinity of Signa, Italy.

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During the night of August 19th the Troop took up positions one mile south of Signa, Italy. Three platoons were used to cover the 900 yard front. The Headquarters Platoon was organized as a reserve of 30 riflemen. The Troop's nine mortars were set up as a battery and zeroed in to cover the front line against infiltration or enemy attacks. Wire was laid to platoon command posts. Two 30 calibre machine guns and a 50 calibre machine gun were assigned flank positions; these weapons to fire in interlocking bands across the entire troop front, or to fire in support of units to our right or left. All positions were manned during the hours of darkness, as enemy patrols were very active. During daylight hours, the excellent observation from our positions allowed the men to rest except those necessary to man observation posts. Troop vehicles were not used in this operation. A motor park was established two and a half miles in the rear of the front line positions. All vehicles were given a 6000 mile check during this period. The long marches from Rome up to the Arno River had brought some vehicular deficiencies, which needed correction. First it was found that thermostats in the armored cars sometimes failed to open after the engine reached operative temperatures. This caused the engine to overheat excessively and in one instance caused the loss of one engine. Vehicular loads in $\frac{1}{2}$ ton vehicles was far in excess to what the vehicles could carry. Springs and shock absorbers were going bad. This situation was remedied by taking all the equipment out of the vehicle except the men's light packs, weapons and ammunition.

On August 20th and 21st the Troop improved positions and patrolled to the front. Twenty-five rounds of enemy artillery fire fell in the left platoon sector. The nights of August 21st and 22nd a combat patrol was sent to the village of S. Lucia. The patrol of six men encountered mortar and machine gun fire enroute to the town but found it deserted.

On August 23rd orders were received stating that the Troop would be relieved by Company B, 2nd Brigade, 6th South African Division. Three officers of this unit came forward on the afternoon of the 23rd and made reconnaissance of our positions. During the night the relief was made without incident. The Troop moved to a bivouac near the village of Montespertoli on August 24th.

From August 25th through September 10th the Troop remained near Montespertoli. During this period range and combat firing was conducted. All weapons were thoroughly checked by ordnance personnel. It was interesting to note that every weapon checked was in excellent condition. This was an indication of the quality of our weapons and the faith the men had in them.

During this period the Division Commander held two unit commanders meetings to thoroughly familiarize all concerned with the nature of our next mission. Our division was to attack the enemy and drive him north through the formidable Gothic Line defenses. The terrain in which this fighting was to take place was the rugged Appennines mountains. The division G-2 obtained all information available concerning the enemy's defenses in this sector and made an explanatory talk on the subject. The Division, Regimental, and Artillery plans were thoroughly explained and discussed so that all were familiar with them. These conferences were top secret.

On the 11th of September the Troop moved through Florence to Vaglia, Italy on highway #65. On the 12th of September the Troop was moved into a concealed bivouac one mile east of Scarperia. From the 13th through the 22nd

of September the Troop remained in the Scarperia area. Artillery fire from the mountains north of Scarperia was received constantly, but no casualties were sustained. On the 22nd of September the Troop was attached to the 338th combat team and given the mission of protecting the left flank of the regiment. The Troop moved to Viola, Italy and the 2nd and 3rd Platoons were infiltrated forward to a point one mile south of Firenzuola, Italy. The terrain around Firenzuola was very advantageous to the enemy, the town being situated in a valley with a stream running directly across our front. The high ground north of the town was held by the enemy and his artillery and mortars could cover the valley. The stream was fordable with difficulties. It was decided to dismount the 2nd and 3rd Platoons, move the 2nd through Firenzuola, then west on a secondary road until the flank units of our infantry were contacted. When this was done the 3rd Platoon could move directly into position without entering the town which was under constant artillery and mortar fire. This plan worked and the contact was established with Regimental, Battalion and Company command posts of the 338th Infantry. The 2nd Platoon suffered two lightly wounded casualties. On reaching the left flank positions of the infantry, two patrols were sent out to gain contact with the enemy on the exposed left or west flank. These patrols working in daylight reached the village of Pagliana where they encountered small arms fire from enemy inside buildings. They withdrew and an artillery barrage was directed against the village. At 1100 hours friendly fighters bombed and strafed the village. By nightfall the 2nd and 3rd Platoons had established a defensive position running from the left flank of the 338th to a contact with the 363rd Infantry to our left rear. The next day, enemy mortar fire increased. The platoon leader of the 2nd Platoon was killed and several men were knocked unconscious by concussion. During the night the 1st Platoon in reserve south of Firenzuola was moved into position on a ridge north of the town to protect the movement of the regimental command post. Patrols were sent out to scour the surrounding hills. Three prisoners were captured. At daybreak the platoon was relieved by a platoon of tanks.

On September 24th, elements of the 363rd Infantry moved forward and relieved the 2nd and 3rd Platoons of the security mission on the left flank of the 338th Infantry. The Troop was assembled in Firenzuola by 1100. The 1st Platoon moved mounted to the vicinity of Mount Coloreta, but was not committed to any action. The next day in Firenzuola weapons were cleaned and equipment checked. On September 26th the Troop was again attached to the 338th Infantry. The mission was to relieve C Company on the slopes of Mt. Peglio. This necessitated a night march of seven miles over mountainous terrain. The relief was carried out by 0400 the morning of September 27th. At this the Troop came under control of the 1st Battalion 338th Infantry. Harassing mortar and machine gun fire was received during the day from the vicinity of Mt. Canda. On September 28th, considerable enemy fire was received on troop positions. No casualties were sustained. A patrol was sent to contact the 361st Infantry on our left flank. This mission was exceedingly difficult due to heavy rain and extremely rough terrain. The patrol of 1 non-commissioned officer and 5 men left our lines at 1900 hours, traveled three miles (map distance) and returned with complete information of adjacent troops at 2200 hours. The executive officer, 1st Battalion, 338th praised the work of this patrol and recommended they be given an award. During the night, word was received that the Troop was relieved from the 338th Infantry and attached to 337th Infantry for operations. At first dark the Troop was assembled and marched back to Firenzuola. Several streams enroute had risen as a result

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of the heavy rains... It was necessary to tie tent ropes together for men to hold to in crossing these torrents. Strong swimmers were stationed below crossing points to rescue men who lost hold of the guide ropes. In the ensuing excitement several lights were flashed and drew enemy artillery fire. By 0200 the 29th, the Troop reached Firenzuola. The remainder of the day was spent in drying clothing and cleaning water soaked weapons and ammunition.

The 337th Regimental command post was located in Piancaldoli, Italy, approximately 20 miles (by road) from Firenzuola. On September 30th, the Troop moved mounted by way of highway #65 and 6529 to Piancaldoli. The Regimental Commander assigned the Troop the mission of maintaining contact with the 337th Regiment and the 349th Infantry of the 38th Division on the right, and to prevent infiltration into the Sillaro Valley. The valley separated the two regiments. A road running its length was the Division boundary. Both regiments were advancing against heavy enemy opposition along ridge lines running roughly parallel to the Sillaro Valley. The valley was lacking in both cover and concealment and was under observation from enemy positions on Mt. Grande to the north, and hills to the east. The 2nd and 3rd Platoons moved north from Piancaldoli 3 miles and took up positions during the night of 30th and 31st on a hill overlooking the valley. The 3rd Battalion, 337th Infantry was contacted at 0300, and the 1st Battalion 349th Infantry by 0330. By daylight, 31st, an armored car and two jeeps had reached Belvedere and found it clear of enemy. The town was receiving heavy artillery and mortar fire, but the 1st Battalion 349th Infantry was able to infiltrate two rifle companies into the town by 1200. The 3rd Battalion, 337th Infantry advanced from Guignola to a ridge 1 mile south of Sassonero. This move placed the Battalions approximately 1800 yards apart, separated by the valley. To carry out the mission it was necessary to attach the armored car in Belvedere to the 1st Battalion, 349th Infantry and place a similar detachment near the 3rd Battalion, 337th Infantry. In addition strongpoints were to be organized in the valley to prevent infiltration by enemy patrols. 50 calibre machine guns were set up in platoon positions to fire harassing fire in the valley forward of our strongpoints. The guns were set up and fired before darkness. During the nights of 30th and 31st, artillery fire increased in both Regimental sectors causing wire communications to be disrupted. The SCR 508 radios performed well, however, and communications were maintained.

An enemy patrol was engaged by our left strongpoint during the night. The enemy was driven off but was brought under fire by "A" Company, 349th Infantry. Two prisoners were captured. Our right strongpoint reported hearing what they thought to be enemy approaching our positions. During this period the weather was foggy during the day and pitch black at night. This situation made the valley a logical approach for the enemy as the stream bed could be followed at night.

On the 1st of October the 349th Infantry was able to advance approximately 1 mile north of Belvedere which placed their advance units approximately abreast of the 3rd Battalion, 337th Infantry. This shortened the distance covered by the Troop in the valley to about 800 yards and allowed the two strongpoints to be moved farther forward and closer together. During the day, patrols were sent north up the valley to determine the conditions of the road leading north. It was discovered that bridges across the stream had been destroyed $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles north of the village of Sasso-Leone.

The 2nd and 3rd of October were spent in the improving of gun positions and relieving men on the outposts in the valley. The strongpoints were manned by a non-commissioned officer and 8 men in each position. Each post had a light machine gun well dug in. The remainder of the squad dug foxholes to the right and left of the light machine gun. The 8 men were armed with 4 rifles and 4 sub-machine guns. The non-commissioned officer had a carbine. 500 yards in rear of these positions, two platoons less 16 men and 2 non-commissioned officers had the 6 armored cars camouflaged behind buildings, but in position to fire by moving them slightly. Local security guards were dug in around these buildings. A four man patrol from this group visited infantry companies on our right and left and the forward strongpoints four times per night at irregular intervals. Radio contact with the 3rd Battalion, 337th Infantry and the 1st Battalion 349th Infantry was maintained at all times.

By October 4th, 1944, artillery and mortar fire had diminished somewhat in the Sillaro Valley. The commanding officer, 337th Infantry ordered that a strongpoint in platoon strength be established at Casa De Sassonero to protect the right flank of the Regiment. The 1st Platoon was assigned this mission and moved in vehicles up the Sillaro Valley. The point received artillery fire when approaching Sasso-Leone. The platoon leader extended distances to 500 yards between vehicles and continued the advance through the town. The artillery fire continued so the platoon took cover in a defilade position just short of a blown out bridge (972229). A foot reconnaissance disclosed that the bridge could be by-passed. Using two $\frac{1}{2}$ ton vehicles the platoon leader by-passed the bridge and moved north 1000 yards. At this point the group came under accurate self-propelled fire. The first vehicle was disabled by the first round and the crew took cover. The second round destroyed the vehicle. The second vehicle was then taken under fire. This vehicle had been driven in the ditch beside the road and was disabled but not destroyed. The platoon leader then returned on foot to his platoon and moved them dismounted to Villa De Sassonero. The small village was found to be deserted. A platoon strongpoint was organized and contact with the 3rd Battalion, 337th Infantry established. The vehicles were then moved by way of Guignola, Spedoletto Trail, to a position 500 yards south of Sassonero.

On October 6th, the 2nd and 3rd Platoons were able to advance dismounted and contact the 1st Platoon in Sassonero. This advance gained control of a wooded ridge running at right angles to the valley. New positions were dug in on this ridge just in rear of the village of Casa De Sassonero. The 1st Platoon position was then removed from the village and the Platoon again put into reserve.

Weather was our worst enemy at this time. Food and ammunition were brought to Casa Di Romagna by jeep, then carried three miles on mules borrowed from the 3rd Battalion, 337th Infantry trains. At times mules were not available, so carrying parties were organized from Headquarters Platoon to carry supplies. This work was done at night during heavy rain and in pitch darkness. Enemy artillery harassed the supply trains sporadically.

The rain had caused telephone wires to short out. All communications between the 337th combat team and the 349th combat team was now being carried on over the armored car radios, attached to the Regimental command posts, and were operating 24 hours per day.

SECRET

The night of October 8th, on order of the C. O., CT 7, locations for road blocks were reconnoitered in the vicinity of (970245). On October 9th, the 1st Platoon moved forward through Sassonero and occupied a ridge 1500 yards north of Sassonero. The 2nd and 3rd Platoons moved forward to take up positions on the right of the 1st Platoon. This movement caused considerable enemy mortar fire and some long range machine gun fire from Hill 214. During the night the Troop Headquarters and vehicles were moved up to Sassonero and a by-pass was constructed around blown bridges in the Sillaro Valley. This move helped the supply situation immeasurably as vehicles could now use Piancaldoli-Guignola-Sassonleone road to Sassonero.

On October 11th two strong patrols were sent to Hill 214. These patrols drew machine gun and rifle fire. After returning the fire, the patrols reached the hill and captured two enemy soldiers. Several enemy were observed retreating. These were brought under fire but results were not obtainable. As a result of this patrol activity, the 1st Platoon covered by fire from K Company, 337th Infantry on our left, took up a defensive position on Hill 214 at dawn October 12th. During the day the 2nd and 3rd Platoons each sent a patrol north to 980282, where the Sillaro Valley road made a right turn. The patrols drew heavy mortar and machine gun fire from the high ground north of the road bend and were forced to withdraw.

On October 14th the Troop less liaison detachment with 337th Infantry and 350th Infantry was relieved from attachment to 337th Infantry and reverted to Division reserve. At 1300 the Troop moved from Sassonero and Frassineta, Italy, a distance of 16 miles. Vehicles and weapons were maintained and men re-equipped for the next mission. Troop was paid and several decorations awarded. On October 19th, the armored car with 350th Infantry was destroyed by a direct hit from a white phosphorus mortar shell. Two men were seriously injured. The vehicle and crew were replaced on the same day.

During this time every effort was made to make conditions as comfortable for the men as possible. Practically every man and officer in the organization was suffering from exposure and colds. In their weakened condition, dysentery was a constant threat. Dry clothes and showers were furnished by the Division and by October 20th, the combat efficiency was back to an excellent classification.

From October 20th through November 15th the Troop assisted the 310th Engineers in maintaining roads within the 85th Division sector. November 16th the Troop moved to the Division rest area, Gagliano, Italy.

/s/ R. B. Thompson
/t/ R. B. THOMPSON
Captain Cavalry,
Commanding

SECRET

- 12 -

1st Ind
HEADQUARTERS MTOUSA, APO 512, 8 April 1945

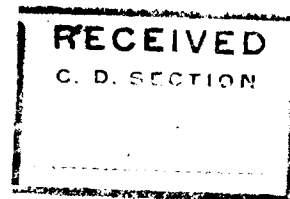
TO: Commanding General, Army Ground Forces, Army War College, Washington 25,
D. C.

ATTENTION: AC of S, G-2

This headquarters has no objection to the reduction in classification of this report to RESTRICTED, provided names of individuals, unit designations and geographical locations are deleted.

FOR THE THEATER COMMANDER:

/s/ Albert W. Karr
/t/ ALBERT W. KARR
Captain, AGD
Asst Adjutant General



SECRET

SECRET

Aug CG 5th Arm Div

Date: 24 Oct 44

Initials: _____

dup

HEADQUARTERS
85TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON MECHANIZED
APO 255

24 October 1944

REPORT AFTER ACTION AGAINST THE ENEMY
(Reference: Par 10, AR 315-105 03)

AUGUST 1944

During the month of August 1944, the 85th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized performed reconnaissance for the 5th Armored Division in three actions which may be designated as follows:

- I. The drive on Le Mans 2 August 1944 to 8 August 1944 inclusive.
- II. The drive north to close the Falaise gap 9 August to 24 August inclusive.
- III. The drive to close the gap at Vernon on the Seine 15 August to 26 August inclusive.

I. The drive on Le Mans

1. General remarks.

- a. The mission of this squadron was to reconnoiter routes, bridges and obstacles along a route generally Periers, Fougeres, Laval to Le Mans and to determine the strength, composition and disposition of the enemy in this sector.
- b. The terrain was generally rolling, interdicted by some small streams which were generally easily forded and interspersed with small woods which could afford the enemy some cover.
- c. The weather during the entire campaign was dry and warm and all classes of roads and trails as well as fields were suitable for armored movement.
- d. At the start of the campaign little was known about the enemy disposition or strength and no definite organized defensive lines were known.
- e. The Squadron Commander disposed his four troops in a line abreast with the assault gun troop in close support of the reconnaissance troops and the tank company well forward readily available to support any troops that might require it.
- f. The French civilians were most cooperative and with the use of a three (3) man IPW team as interpreters plus civilians who were picked up as the move progressed much valuable and timely enemy information was speedily obtained.

**DOWNGRADED TO:
CLASSIFICATION REMOVED**

BY AUTHORITY OF TAG LTC

1 Feb 46

Date

HSD

Initials

953

all

2. Chronological Account.

2 August 1944 - The squadron moved into position vicinity of Louvions. During the movement our elements received their first fire and learned two deceptions the enemy practiced. Dismounted men concealed themselves in the hedges, allowed our armored vehicles to pass and then fired on the unprotected $\frac{1}{2}$ tons. This problem was quickly solved by flushing suspected areas with machine gun fire and cannister shell from the 37mm gun. The second trick of the enemy was to lie in ditches as though dead and then fire at our rear. The solution to this was for scouts to fire on all Germans whether they appeared dead or not. The first round usually brought the live ones to their feet and they were quickly disposed of.

3 August 1944 - During the day our elements moved to the vicinity of Fourgeres but were unable to obtain contact with the enemy. Civilian reports of small numbers of enemy to our front persisted but it became evident by the end of the day that the enemy would not defend in strength at least until we reached Laval where it was learned the enemy was gathering his forces. A total of 13 prisoners of war captured that day were stragglers and offered no information of an organized defensive line but did indicate positions of AT guns which were to be used in a delaying action.

4 August 1944 - The squadron continued its reconnaissance to the south and east of Cougeres pushing on toward Vitre. Again no contact was gained with enemy in strength but civilian reports and interrogation of prisoners of war indicated the enemy withdrawal to Laval was approaching a rout.

5 August 1944 - Leading elements pushed on through Vitre and Ernee now in close pursuit of the enemy who had taken to the roads on foot and vehicles of all kinds. Small groups of the enemy attempted to delay our movement with small arms fire, some anti-tank fire and hastily constructed road blocks but he was quickly disposed of by our fire. The enemy attempted and quite successfully jammed our radio communication during this period and difficulty was experienced in getting information back to higher headquarters.

6 August 1944 - On our advance this date, the enemy delayed us for some time in the vicinity of Cosse Le Vivien by small arms fire and a definite AT defense of the town. By early evening after several fire fights, the enemy had withdrawn from Cosse Le Vivien and advance elements were on the outskirts of Laval.

7 August 1944 - On this date the squadron made a rapid move on about a 25 mile front to the Sarthe River line where practically all bridges were either blown or prepared for demolitions. Our units crossed the river by fords and existing bridges and advance elements reached the outskirts of Le Mans. As our elements reached the town enroute the German garrisons moved out to the east offering little resistance to our movement and by the end of the day the road net from Laval to Le Mans was completely clear of enemy forces.

8 August 1944 - During the day the division passed through our unit and we assembled our unit in the vicinity of Change in preparation for a new mission.

II. The drive north to close the Falaise gap.

1. General remarks:

a. The mission of the squadron was to reconnoiter routes, bridges, obstacles and demilitations along a route generally Le Mans, Peray, Bonnetable, Marners, Moulins, Coutomer to Sees and determine strength, composition and disposition of the enemy in that sector.

b. Again the terrain and weather favored armored action but the area is well populated by towns so situated that they could be well defended by the enemy.

c. Little information about enemy strength and disposition was known but it was felt that pressure from the south would cause him to either attempt to escape the closing of the gap or bitterly fight to hold the gap open for escape of all his elements.

d. French civilians continued their assistance but it had been learned that civilian reports had to be studied, weighed and collated very carefully as there was a tendency to exaggerate.

e. The squadron commander disposed his troops on a comparatively narrow front to meet the difficulty which it was felt would be encountered if the enemy had disposed his troops so as to make strong points of the various cities and villages enroute.

2. Chronological account.

9 August 1944 - The movement of the squadron was delayed by small but determined resistance by small arms and AF fire vicinity Courcival, Beauffy and Peray but by the next morning the combined efforts of our troops and the main elements of the division which were close behind these strong points had been reduced.

10 August 1944 - Civilian reports indicated that Ecomy, Ardenay, Savigne, Bonnetable and Bailon were still occupied by enemy forces in strength but these strong points were bypassed and the squadron moved to the vicinity of Marolles with leading elements moving toward Marners and La Ferte Bernard.

11 August 1944 - The division passed through our elements and attacked to the north of our position. Our elements continued to reconnoiter Bellesme, Marners and the Foret de Parseigne but enemy defenses prevented our elements from probing the enemy positions.

12 August 1944 - The division attack having accomplished its mission the squadron moved north with the mission of outposting the towns of Moulins and Coutomer and by active patrolling to determine enemy strength in these towns and also Gace, Sees and Laigle with particular emphasis on enemy movement on that road net. Our out posts and patrols periodically reported the enemy activity in this sector.

13, 14 and 15 August 1944 - Continued mission and from these reports G - 2 estimated approximately one division reinforced was holding the sector Coutomer - Moulins. This later proved to be approximately correct.

III. The drive to close the gap at Vernon on the Seine.

1. General remarks:

a. A portion of the enemy having escaped the Falaise - Gace gap, this squadron was given the mission of performing reconnaissance for the division along a route generally east to Dreux and then northeast to Mantes Gassicourt so that the division could be employed in another trap.

b. Weather and terrain continued to favor our operations.

c. The route of advance was believed to be held lightly at best by the enemy with some question of enemy strength in Dreux.

2. Chronological account.

15 August 1944 - Squadron reorganized and prepared for new mission and moved out in the afternoon.

16 August 1944 - Squadron moved from Crucey to Crecey no enemy contact.

17 August 1944 - Squadron moved from Crecey to Champagne meeting enemy in Houlan and Boutigny. Bridges across the river vicinity of Cha pont had been blown. Enemy interdicted cross roads enroute with artillery and heavy mortars.

18 August 1944 - On this date the squadron was given the mission of protecting the rear and right flank of the division while the division moved north toward Vernon and Houbedonville and Caillon. The squadron commander proposed to accomplish this mission by out posting the Eure River on the west side from Ivry la Mettaile north and the day was spent reconnoitering and establishing suitable observation along the river.

19 August 1944 - Observation of the east side of the river was good and the enemy remained on the defensive. The day was marked with exaggerated reports of enemy activity by civilians who were apparently fearful that we were not doing our job since we ourselves remained concealed.

20 August 1944 - Enemy movement from Ivry to Saranmes was noted during the day but he made no attempt to cross the river.

21 August 1944 - Our scouts began to probe vicinity of Aigleville and Pacy sur Eure and found both towns occupied and the bridges around Pacy blown. Enemy did not seem disposed to fight and there were indications that he was moving out of town to the woods to the north. Enemy fired small amount of mortar at our OP denying us the use of one OP during the day.

22 August 1944 - Our scouts found Pacy and Aigleville clear of enemy. Enemy returned to town and terrorized civilians this night.

24 and 25 August 1944 - Squadron moved north east across the Eure river and north to replace division in the salient in the Seine River vicinity Vernon, Humberdoville and Gaillon with mission of covering withdrawal of the division and outposting that area. The three mentioned towns were outposted and the enemy remained inactive during the period of our occupancy. Squadron was relieved on 26 August 1944.

26 to 29 August 1944 - Squadron vicinity Guerville for rest and refits. On 29 August Squadron moved to St Cloud, outskirts of Paris and prepared for new mission.

30 - 31 August 1944 - Squadron started to move NE from Paris and reached vicinity of Rully by 31st. During this period all elements were opposed by strong delaying detachments of small arms and anti-tank fire which impeded our progress and slowed down the movement of the division. Three of our reconnaissance troops were detached from squadron control and one reconnaissance troop with attachments of the assault gun troop and light tank was attached to each combat command and the balance of the squadron moved back to Baron to guard division trains.

2 Incls.
Incl 1 - Annex "A"
Incl 2 - Annex "B"

GEORGE C. BENJAMIN
Major, Cavalry,
Commanding.

Annex "A"

SUMMARY OF STRENGTH AND CASUALTIES

AUGUST 1944

	Asgd Strength 1 Aug 44			Asgd Strength 31 Aug 44		
	<u>OFF</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>EM</u>	<u>OFF</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>EM</u>
Headquarters	9	1	46	8	1	46
Hq. & Sv. Troop	3	2	78	4	2	78
Troop A	5	0	133	5	0	138
Troop B	5	0	134	5	0	131
Troop C	5	0	134	5	0	133
Troop D	5	0	134	5	0	135
Troop E	5	0	102	5	0	101
Company F	5	0	89	5	0	91
Medical Detachment	2	0	12	2	0	12
TOTAL	<u>44</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>860</u>	<u>44</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>865</u>

CASUALTIES (85th -)	<u>OFF</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>EM</u>
Killed	5	0	8
Wounded	3	0	48
Missing	0	0	5
Known Captured	0	0	0
	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>61</u>

ENEMY PRISONERS OF WAR CAPTURED BY OUR FORCES: 34.

Annex "B"

COMMANDING OFFICERS

AUGUST 1944

SQUADRON COMMANDER:

1 August 1944 to 1500, 30 August 1944 - Lt. Col. KENT FAY,
0286301, Cavalry.

1500, 30 August 1944 to 31 August 1944 - Major JOHN P. GERALD,
023009, Cavalry.

TROOPS OF THE SQUADRON:

HEADQUARTERS AND SERVICE TROOP:

1 August 1944 to 31 August 1944 - 1st Lt. PAUL O. PETERSON,
01010111, Cavalry.

TROOP A:

1 August 1944 to 31 August 1944 - Capt. CHARLES W. BENNINGTON,
0452900, Cavalry.

TROOP B:

1 August 1944 to 31 August 1944 - Capt. KENNETH M. HAYES,
01010128, Cavalry.

TROOP C:

1 August 1944 to 31 August 1944 - Capt. JOHN R. VANE,
01010690, Cavalry.

TROOP D:

1 August 1944 to 31 August 1944 - Capt. LEONARD S. CARLSON,
01011717, Cavalry.

TROOP E:

1 August 1944 to 2400, 28 August 1944 - 1st Lt. EUGENE F.
COLBERT, 01011108, Cavalry.

0001, 29 August 1944 to 31 August 1944 - Capt. PATRICK J.
BURNS, JR., 01010461, Cavalry.

COMPANY F:

1 August 1944 to 31 August 1944 - Capt. JOHN T. SCHWARZ,
01010396, Cavalry.

MEDICAL DETACHMENT:

1 August 1944 to 31 August 1944 - Capt. MEYER FRIEDENTHAL,
0425804, Medical Corps.

**DOWNGRADED TO
CLASSIFICATION REMOVED**

HEADQUARTERS
35th CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON MECHANIZED
APO No 255, U S Army

BY AUTHORITY OF TAG LTC

24 October 1944.

REPORT AFTER ACTION AGAINST THE ENEMY

(Reference: Par 10, AR 345-105 C3)

1 Feb 46
Date

HCL
Initials

SEPTEMBER 1944

This squadron during the period was on missions involving little contact with the enemy. At all times during the period one or more troops were attached to the combat commands for operations. The month can be divided into following periods:

- I. Trains Security - 1 September to 6 September.
- II. Attached to 28th Infantry Division - 8 September to 9 September.
- III. Attached to Division Troops - 9 September to 10 September.
- IV. Security for city of Luxembourg - 11 September to 19 September.
- V. Outposting of Oura River - 20 September to 30 September.

I. Trains Security.

Squadron (minus) outposted Trains bivouac area vicinity Baron from 1 September 1944 to 6 September 1944 and had no contact with the enemy.

II. Attachment to 28th Infantry Division.

Squadron in its entirety was attached to 28th Infantry Division for a 24 hour period with the mission of moving East from vicinity of Douzy to the Luxembourg - German border vicinity of Meternash by darkness, 8 September 1944. The squadron was unable to accomplish its assigned mission being stopped by enemy anti-tank and artillery fire vicinity Suxy and Chiny which our elements were attempting to bypass when relieved from attachment to the 28th Infantry Division.

III. Attachment to Division Troops.

On the 9th and 10th September, Squadron (minus) moved with division troops to vicinity of Mersch, Luxembourg and had no contact with the enemy.

IV. Security For City of Luxembourg.

11th to 19th September 1944 Squadron (minus) was given the mission of protecting the City of Luxembourg from the South and East. This was accomplished by establishing road blocks and OP's at all main arteries and by sending out small mounted patrols during daylight hours. Enemy remained on the defensive and maintained only small garrisons in the towns immediately East of Luxembourg. Occasionally our patrols engaged the enemy in brief fire fights. Squadron was attached to CC A 16 September 1944 but mission and disposition remained unchanged.

V. Outposting Oura River Line.

1. 20th to 22nd September 1944 Squadron remained attached to CG A was relieved of mission to protect City of Luxembourg and moved 20 September to vicinity Graulinster with mission of screening main North - South route and protecting right flank of V Corps. Squadron established outposts along line from 3rd Army north boundary to V Corps south boundary and actively patrolled the sector. During period no contact was had with the enemy and he remained on the defensive.

2. 23rd to 30th September 1944 Squadron attached to 102nd Cavalry Group and assigned mission of screening main North - South highway. Mission was accomplished by occupying the high ground immediately West of line Puteheid to Vianden (inclusive). Enemy continued to occupy Vianden during period but did not pierce our line. During period enemy sporadically shelled our sector with single artillery piece and some mortars. Our patrols were active but made little contact with the enemy. 27th September 1944 Squadron was relieved from attachment to 102nd Cavalry Group and attached to CG A with same mission.

GEORGE C. BENJAMIN,
Major, Cavalry
Commanding.

2 Incls.

Incl 1 - Annex "A".

Incl 2 - Annex "B".

Annex "A"

SUMMARY OF STRENGTH AND CASUALTIES

SEPTEMBER 1944

Asgd Strength 1 Sept 44 Asgd Strength 30 Sept 44

	<u>OFF</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>EM</u>	<u>OFF</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>EM</u>
Headquarters	8	1	46	9	1	45
Hq. & Sv. Troop	4	2	78	3	2	76
Troop A	5	0	138	4	0	123
Troop B	4	0	131	5	0	127
Troop C	5	0	132	5	0	125
Troop D	5	0	135	5	0	127
Troop E	5	0	98	4	0	93
Company F	5	0	91	5	0	85
MEDICAL DETACHMENT	2	0	12	2	0	12
TOTAL	<u>45</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>861</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>815</u>

CASUALTIES (85th -)	<u>OFF</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>EM</u>
Killed	0	0	2
Wounded	0	0	11
Missing	0	0	0
Known Captured	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTAL	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>13</u>

ENEMY PRISONERS OF WAR CAPTURED BY OUR FORCES: 1.

Annex "B"

COMMANDING OFFICERS

SEPTEMBER 1944

SQUADRON COMMANDER:

**1 September 1944 to 30 September 1944 - Major JOHN P. GERALD,
023009, Cavalry.**

TROOPS OF THE SQUADRON:

HEADQUARTERS AND SERVICE TROOP:

**1 September 1944 to 30 September 1944 - Capt. PAUL O. PETERSON,
01010111, Cavalry.**

**TROOP A: 1 September 1944 to 2400, 12 September 1944 - Capt. CHARLES
W. BENNINGTON, 0452900, Cavalry.**

**0001, 13 September 1944 to 30 September 1944 - 1st Lt. FRED
A. FORSGREN, 01010173, Cavalry.**

**TROOP B: 1 September 1944 to 30 September 1944 - Capt. KENNETH M.
HAYES, 01010128, Cavalry.**

**TROOP C: 1 September 1944 to 30 September 1944 - Capt. JOHN R. VANE,
01010690, Cavalry.**

**TROOP D: 1 September 1944 to 1200, 12 September 1944 - Capt. LEONARD
S. CARLSON, 01011717, Cavalry.**

**1200, 12 September 1944 to 30 September 1944 - 1st Lt.
EDWARD J. MC GANN, 01012641, Cavalry.**

**TROOP E: 1 September 1944 to 2100, 2 September 1944 - Capt. PATRICK
J. BURNS, JR., 01010461, Cavalry.**

**2100, 2 September 1944 to 30 September 1944 - 1st Lt.
PETER C. MUNZELL, 01012058, Cavalry.**

**COMPANY F: 1 September 1944 to 30 September 1944 - Capt. JOHN T.
SCHWARZ, 01010396, Cavalry.**

**MEDICAL DETACHMENT: 1 September 1944 to 30 September 1944 - Capt.
MEYER FRIEDENTHAL, 0425804, Medical Corps.**

dup

HEADQUARTERS
85TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON MECHANIZED
APO No 255, U S Army

4 November 1944

SUBJECT: Letter of Transmittal.

TO : Commanding General, 5th Armored Division, APO No 255, U S Army.

Transmitted herewith is Report After Action Against the Enemy, and unit journal for the month of October 1944.

For the Squadron Commander:

PAUL E. HOBBS,
1st Lt, Cav
Adjutant

3 Incls.

Incl 1 - Report After Action Against the Enemy
(in quadruplicate)

Incl 2 - Unit Journal.

Incl 3 - MESSAGE FILE.

695-712

HEADQUARTERS
85TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON MECHANIZED
APO No 255, U S Army

DOWNGRADED TO:

CLASSIFICATION REMOVED

BY AUTHORITY OF TAG LTC

4 November 1944

REPORT AFTER ACTION AGAINST THE ENEMY
(Reference: Par 10, AR 345-105, U3)

Feb 46
Date

HSD
Initials

OCTOBER 1944

SECTION I - The Enemy and Elements Affecting Action.

1. Enemy Situation.

a. During the month the enemy had disposed three battalions of the 1056th Regiment along the line east of Monschau, Hofen, Alzen to Wahlerscheid. From Wahlerscheid south, the 77th Infantry Battalion was holding the sector from that town south to vicinity F 0110.

b. Enemy was occupying fortifications in this sector and had also dug in on the high ground in his sector.

c. Enemy had estimated 4 to 6 81mm mortars per battalion and had in the entire sector 6 or 8 pieces of artillery believed mobile caliber 75 to 150 which he fired sporadically as single guns.

d. Enemy was generally content to defend and hold his fortifications but on occasion attempted to probe our lines with patrols up to 20 - 30 men strength.

e. Enemy was well supplied with automatic weapons and although his soldiers were mostly stragglers, convalescents and overage, they were welltrained and battle tried and in the few contacts they made with our forces, displayed ability to fight well.

f. Enemy used a considerable number of T mines in trails and fords and various types of antipersennel mines in likely avenues of approach.

g. Enemy patrols took advantage of darkness, dusk, or dawn and fog to attempt to infiltrate our lines and was generally quiet on clear days.

2. Terrain and weather.

a. The terrain along Hofen afforded excellent observation of the enemy, but the high ground to the northeast which the enemy held also gave him excellent observation of our positions and also all available avenues of approach. To the south of Alzen the area is wooded on both sides of the border, gives practically no observation in any direction and offers very limited fields of fire. Enemy used the cover of the woods for ambush patrols.

b. The weather during the period was marked by considerable intermittent rain and fog and poor visibility. Precipitation made the secondary roads difficult for all types of vehicles and cross country movement was almost impossible, consequently vehicular movement was limited to hard surfaced roads.

3. Civilian population.

During the first few days civilian population remain in Kalterherberg and

while it was necessary to evacuate 5 or 6 civilians who were suspected it was finally determined that none were guilty of espionage. During the rest of the period Kalterherberg, Hofem, and Alzen were evacuated and no civilians were contacted in our area.

4. Effectiveness of Enemy Information.

a. Estimated 90% of enemy information was obtained from Prisoners of War. This information was very complete and accurate. Other information was obtained by use of observation posts and field artillery liaison plane. Actual observation of patrols proved generally of little value in obtaining enemy information.

SECTION II - Action.

1. Mission.

a. To form a counter-reconnaissance screen in the assigned sector to deny the enemy knowledge of the disposition, movement, and plan of troops in this area - namely V Corps.

b. To patrol aggressively seeking to increase our knowledge of enemy disposition, plans, and movement.

2. General Plan of Action.

a. Principal action consisted of patrolling, either combat or the "sneak and peep" variety, depending on the situation.

b. Missions have been progressive being based on the most recent reports received.

3. Headquarters to which attached; Command Post Locations.

a. (1) 1 October 1944, the 85th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized (less Troop C with the third platoon Troop E) was attached to Combat Command A, 5th Armored Division, with Squadron Command Post at Hoscheid, Luxembourg.

(2) Troop C with third platoon Troop E attached to Combat Command B with mission of screening area from Wallendorf south to Grundhof.

(3) At 011200, orders were received attaching the entire Squadron to 102nd Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron; attachment effective 020600 October.

(4) 3 October 1944 - Squadron Command Post and Company F moved from Kalterherberg to Hofen.

(5) 6 October 1944 - Troops A and C relieved by 102nd Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron and reported to Division Trains, 5th Armored Division.

~~a. (1) 12 October 1944 - 1st Battalion, 110th Infantry Regiment~~

b. (1) 2 October 1944, Squadron moved to Kalterherberg, Germany and took up position there and east through Hofen to contact Company F, 110th Infantry Regiment on the left and the 38th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized on the right

(2) One battery 400th FA Battalion in support. One platoon 801st AB battalion and two platoons Company B, 146th Combat engineers attached.

(3) 3 October 1944 - Squadron Command Post and Company F moved from Kalterherberg to Hofen.

c. (1) 12 October 1944 - 1st Battalion, 110th Infantry Regiment takes over entire sector except that held by C Troop, 102nd Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron. 85th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized takes over sector (951118 to 963109), formerly held by 38th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron. Command Post at 937106, Southeast of Kalterherberg. All attachments reverted to parent units.

(2) 19 October 1944 - Command Post moved to 925096.

d. (1) 22 October 1944 - 85th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized reverted to control 5th Armored Division effective 230600A. Relieved 102nd Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron in sector from 945113 to 953120. Command Post at Kalterher-

berg (926135).

(2) 27 October 1944 - Troop A relieved from attachment to Combat Command A, 5th Armored Division.

(3) 30 October 1944 - Troop C relieved from attachment to Combat Command B, 5th Armored Division.

4. Assistance from Supporting Units.

a. Artillery support has been constant. Targets for artillery were frequently found by our patrols when weather conditions grounded liaison planes. A defense plan for this sector was completed in conjunction with a "Final Defensive Fires" plan from 400th Armored FA Battalion.

b. Since approximately 25 October 1944 two platoons of the 115th AAA Group have been supporting this sector with their fire, which has proven very effective against ground targets as evidenced by two statements by prisoners of War taken nearby.

(1) 29 October 1944 - Prisoner of War stated "he had high respect for our AAA fire. States that most of the fire went over his particular position but because sometimes the whole hillside was sprayed, it was almost impossible to do any work during daylight hours".

(2) 1 November 1944 - Prisoners of War stated "They were in a position about 30 yards from our lines. They did not receive artillery fire there but every day there were casualties from our mortar, rifle grenade, and AAA fire".

5. Special Weapons Used.

a. One Browning Automatic Rifle, found when this unit moved into Hofen, proved to be invaluable. Every effort has been made to borrow more of these weapons, but without success.

b. As a substitute automatic carbines are proving very satisfactory.

c. Use of Grenades.

(1) In the heavily wooded terrain, grenades of all types, rigged as booby-traps were used. Traps were put out at night and removed in the daytime.

(2) In our troops sector (Troop B) nine enemy patrols were stopped by mere booby-traps. One patrol consisted of approximately twenty enemy.

6. Communications.

a. Difficulty was at first experienced due to the unwieldiness of the SCR 509. It requires two men to carry this set and some little time to set it up for use. Also, continuous communication is not possible with this set which makes it very undesirable for use by patrols. This problem was solved by borrowing several SCR 300 radios from the infantry.

SECTION III - Chronological Account.

1 Oct - Squadron continued screening mission vicinity Hoescheid. Enemy mined a culvert just north of Hoesingen during the night, estimated 50 lb charge of explosive. Enemy continued his interdictory fire of the road vicinity Hoesingen. Squadron continued outpost and patrol activity. Patrol had fire fight in which two enemy were killed and one taken prisoner vicinity 8455.

2 Oct - Squadron moved to new sector and took new positions along east road of Hofen, Germany. Squadron CP at Kaltarherberg. No enemy activity.

3 Oct - Squadron forward CP moved to Hofen. Enemy remained on the defensive but interdicted Hofen with artillery and mortar fire. Our patrol attempting to move east was stopped at 968154 by small arms fire and mortar fire. Another of our patrols captured one PW from the XI7 Inf and Hspt Bn.

4 Oct - Our artillery commenced interdictory fire of likely avenues of approach to our positions and also fired at enemy vehicular movement moving south from Rohren with good effect. No other enemy contacts were made.

5 Oct - At dawn under cover of fog, enemy sent a strong patrol of estimated 25 men against the southern part of our line. His patrol was supported by inaccurate mortar fire. Patrol was repulsed by our coordinated fire from mortars, machine guns and 37mm. canister fire from our M-8 Armored Cars. A similar attempt was made at noon against our northern sector and was quickly repulsed by our fire.

Our patrols were able to penetrate to vicinity 959177 where we received heavy small arms fire from pillboxes in that vicinity. Our artillery continued night interdictory fire.

6 Oct - Our artillery fired observed fire at enemy dismounted men with good effect. In our southern sector, during night of Oct 5 - 6, enemy patrol tripped one of our booby traps. Two enemy were killed, the balance of the patrol left, leaving behind six bazookas and ten rifles.

7 Oct - Enemy interdicted Hofen and Kaltarherberg with estimated 150mm artillery. Our engineers started its mission of destroying unoccupied pillboxes and our TD platoon fired on occupied pillboxes with some effect. Enemy patrolling remained inactive.

8 Oct - Our artillery, TD platoon and Assault guns fired effectively with the artillery liaison plane in observation, targets: enemy dismounted men. At night our artillery fired at enemy vehicles heard moving south from Rohren with good effect. Enemy continued interdictory fire of Hofen but his patrols remained inactive.

9 Oct - Our artillery continued to fire at dismounted enemy, our fire being adjusted by our observation posts with good results. Enemy continued his interdictory fire with what was estimated to be 75mm or 80mm self propelled guns. Several three or four man patrols attempted to infiltrate our lines but our assault guns dispersed them quickly.

10 Oct - Our artillery continued to fire at dismounted enemy and our engineers continued to destroy unoccupied pillboxes. Our patrol contacted enemy platoon vicinity 9517 and the area was shelled by our artillery with unknown effect.

11 Oct - The was quiet except for heavy 81mm mortar fire by enemy on area 964150, probably observed fire. It was necessary to employ artillery on the enemy mortar position to enable our troops to move out of the fire. Two casualties resulted.

SECTION III - Chronological Account (contd)

12 Oct - Enemy remained quiet, contenting himself with interdictory mortar fire and small arms fire at our liaison plane when it tried to locate the mortar positions. In the afternoon Squadron moved to new sector south of Kallertberg and took up new positions with similar mission.

13 Oct - Squadron improved its positions and sent out patrols to reconnoiter new sector which was found to be extremely wooded. Enemy road blocks, undefended were found on all roads leading to Kuhlensheid.

14 Oct - Enemy remained passively defensive. Our patrols were able to reach positions of observation on several pillboxes without enemy contact.

15 Oct - Enemy inactive. Our ambush patrols captured one ~~of~~ from 77 Inf Bn. Tellermine in creek bed destroyed one of our $\frac{1}{2}$ tons and caused one casualty. Our patrol located enemy road block defended by machine guns and mortars. Four enemy killed. Two uncharted bunkers with barbed wire and mines reported. Same patrol spotted small plane similar to our liaison plane taking off. Study of aerial photo reveals air strip.

16 Oct - No enemy contacted.

17 Oct - Two patrols sent out with mission of removing road block previously reported. Both patrols ran into enemy ambush parties in vicinity of road block. In fire fight we suffered two casualties plus one officer missing in action. Enemy using American M1 rifles and one man observed wearing American helmet, another a GI wool knit cap.

18 Oct - Patrol returned to vicinity of enemy ambush. No enemy were contacted.

19 - 21 Oct - No enemy contact made by patrols during this period.

22 Oct - Orders received changing our sector to that held by the 102nd Cavalry Squadron and returning us to 5th Armored Division's control. Change completed by 230000H.

23 Oct - Patrol reports shack in our sector site for small enemy ambush party. Our artillery interdicts this site that night.

24 Oct - Reports from our patrols are negative. COA directed our artillery fire on enemy mortar position. Artillery scared out dismounted enemy and sounds of vehicle movement toward Rohren were heard.

Enemy patrol spotted working in toward line held by B Co, 17th Inf. In same sector enemy vehicle (possibly a tank) driven off by our artillery.

Enemy horse drawn artillery neutralized by our artillery.

One of our $\frac{1}{2}$ tons fired on by enemy patrol.

25 Oct - No enemy contacted by our patrols.

26 Oct - One of our patrols contacted enemy at house opposite our sector and directed fire from our assault guns on target.

Other patrol spotted tracks and other evidence of enemy patrols.

SECTION III - Chronological Account (contd)

It was decided at this point that our troop on the line would send out a patrol daily with the mission of ambushing enemy operating patrols against our sector, while the other troop would send out the usual patrols to reconnoiter the enemy line.

This plan was followed through 31 October 1944.

115 AAA fired on enemy PB's and surrounding area. PW taken by CGR several days later described this fire as being very effective.

27 Oct - Ambush patrol spotted eight enemy but was unable to engage them. The other patrol found fresh signs of enemy activity in the sector (i.e. footprints, cigarette butts etc) and observed three enemy leave pillbox east of Algen with messkits and enter small patch of woods nearby. Our artillery interdicted this spot during the night and 115 AAA fired on it several times the following day.

28 Oct - Ambush patrol negative. Other patrol found observation tower at 966134 blown by enemy. Several other towers were found in this area some of which show signs of occupancy.

Patrol spotted two pillboxes, one uncharted and showing no damage from our artillery. 115 AAA fired on this pillbox that night and our artillery put concentrations on it for several days following.

29 Oct - Ambush patrol in fire fight with six enemy. One enemy soldier wounded or killed. Other enemy soldiers carried him away during fight.

Other patrol fired on three enemy laying wire. Killed one man. We suffered no casualties.

Patrol was able to observe fire from AA and reported it as being effective.

30 - 31 Oct - Both patrols report all quiet. No contact with enemy. Our artillery and 115 AAA continued interdictory fires in this sector.

2 Incls.
Incl 1 - Annex "A"
Incl 2 - Annex "B"

GEORGE C. BENJAMIN,
Major, Cavalry,
Commanding.

Army A
Summary of Strength and Casualties
October 1944

	Asgd Strength 1 October 1944			Asgd Strength 31 Oct 1944		
	<u>off</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>EM</u>	<u>off</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>EM</u>
Headquarters	9	1	44	9	1	46
Hq & Sr Troop	3	2	76	3	2	78
Troop A	4	0	122	4	0	134
Troop B	5	0	127	4-0		133
Troop C	5	6	125	4-0		132
Troop D	5	0	127	4-0		137
Troop E	4	0	93	3-0		104
Company F	5	0	85	5-0		89
Medical Detachment	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>2-0</u>	<u></u>	<u>12</u>
TOTALS	42	3	811	38	3	865

Casualties (85th-)	<u>off</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>EM</u>
Killed	1	0	3
Wounded	3	0	7
Missing	1	0	0
Known Captured	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	5	0	10

Enemy Prisoners of War Captured by our forces: 8

Annex "B"
Commanding Officers
October 1944

Squadron Commander:

1 October 1944 to 1600, 17 October 1944 - Major John P. Gerald, 023009, Cavalry (killed in action 17 October 1944)

1600, 17 October 1944 to 31 October 1944 - Major George C. Benjamin, 023432, Cavalry.

Troops of the Squadron:

Headquarters and Service Troop:

1 October 1944 to 31 October 1944 - Capt Paul O. Peterson,
01010111, Cavalry.

Troop A:

1 October 1944 to 31 October 1944 - 1st Lt. Fred A. Forsgren,
01010173, Cavalry.

Troop B:

1 October 1944 to 31 October 1944 - Capt Kenneth M. Hayes,
01010128, Cavalry.

Group C:

1 October 1944 to 1200, 15 October 1944 - Capt John R. Vance,
01010690, Cavalry (Transferred to Headquarters and assigned
duty as S-3)

1200, 15 October 1944 to 31 October 1944 - 1st Lt. George W.
Basquez, 01012910, Cavalry.

Group D:

1 October 1944 to 31 October 1944 - 1st Lt Edward J. Mc Ginn,
01012646, Cavalry

Group E:

1 October 1944 to 2000, 1 October 1944 - 1st Lt. Peter C. Munnell
01012058, Cavalry (Wounded, Non-battle, 1 October, 1944 evacuated
to hospital).

2000, 1 October 1944 to 31 October 1944 - 1st Lt Peter M.
Soutter, 01012549, Cavalry.

Company F:

1 October 1944 to 31 October 1944 - Capt John J. Schwarz,
01010396, Cavalry.

(over)

Medical Document:

1 October 1944 to 31 October 1944 - Capt Meyer
Friedenthal, 0425804, Medical Corps.

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AUTH: Ltr, 5 AD,

DATE: 19 Oct 44

Init: *PH*

HEADQUARTERS
85TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON MECHANIZED
APO No 255, U S Army

3 December 1944

SUBJECT: Letter Of Transmittal.

TO : Commanding General, 5th Armored Division, APO No 255,
U. S. Army.

Forwarded herewith is Report After Action Against the
Enemy for month of November 1944.

For the Squadron Commander:

PAUL E. HOBBS,
1st Lt, Cav
Adjutant

dup

S E C R E T

Auth: Ltr 5thAD 19 Oct 44

Date: 1 DEC 44

Init: PSG

HEADQUARTERS
85TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON MECHANIZED
APO 255

1 December 1944

REPORT AFTER ACTION AGAINST THE ENEMY
(Reference: Par 10, AR 345-105, G3)

NOVEMBER 1944

SECTION I - The Enemy and Elements Affecting Action.

1. Enemy Situation.

a. The Siegfried line to our front was manned by second grade troops. Besides occupation of the pillboxes, the enemy had dug in, mined all likely approaches and had a few pieces of believed to be self propelled artillery which he fired sporadically as harassing fire. The enemy was content to remain passively defensive and little contact was had.

2. Terrain and Weather.

a. Terrain was wooded and hilly and offered little observation to our outposts or patrols. The enemy was equally limited in his observation and gained little information about our disposition.

3. Civilian population.

a. During the first nine days of the month, squadron occupied an area which had been evacuated of civilians so no problem was presented. During the rest of the period, while civilians were in the area, the CAC and CIC had previously screened all civilians and were very successfully controlling circulation. No difficulty with civilians was experienced in our immediate area.

4. Air Activity

a. Enemy air was inactive during the period but his V-1 weapon passed over our area as often as eight to ten times a day, generally moving in the direction of Liege, Belgium. Several fell short and detonated within several miles of our troops but no casualties or damage were suffered.

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SECTION II - Action.

1. Mission.

a. Prior to 8 November 1944 the Squadron mission was one of screening and counter-reconnaissance in its assigned zone immediately south of Hofen, Germany.

b. After 10 November 1944 the Squadron mission was to be prepared to effect a delaying action on the Eupen - Monschau road and the Rotgen - Monschau road should the enemy succeed in penetrating the line held by the 102nd Cavalry Group.

2. Plan of Action - Positions were taken on both roads and defenses set up so as to deny the enemy use of these highways.

a. Troops A and B with Troop E (minus two platoons) established a series of prepared road blocks on the Eupen - Monschau road. Trees were notched and charges prepared for immediate use. Fire blocks in all were thus made ready. Defensive positions were chosen and intrenchments dug where necessary.

b. Troop D with one platoon of assault guns from Troop E in support prepared several culverts on the Rotgen - Monschau road for blowing of craters. Large charges of TNT were prepared and kept in readiness. A feasible delaying action was evolved and practiced diligently.

c. Narrative of Action - No action involving contact with the enemy took place during the entire month, excepting a small amount of enemy artillery fire in our sector prior to our move on 9 November 1944.

d. Principal activity consisted of making initial plan to accomplish mission and subsequently improving positions and preparing for future operations. A weekly training schedule was followed.

3. Headquarters to which attached; Command Post Locations.

a. On 1 November 1944 the Squadron was relieved from CCR and attached to CCE. No change in mission or position involved. CP continued in Kalterherberg, Germany at K929134 and there was no alterations of position of our troops in that vicinity. F Company attached to CCA.

b. On 9 November 1944 the Squadron minus F Company relieved by 2nd Bn, 505th Regt, 99th Inf. Div., relief effective 1200A. Squadron moved to assembly area vicinity Schoppen, Belgium (897009).

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3. On 10 November 1944 Squadron reverted to Division being relieved from COB by verbal orders of the Chief of Staff at approximately 1000A.

d. Squadron move to new location vicinity of Eupen, Belgium completed 11 November 1944 at 1230A. C.P. located on the Eupen - Monschau highway at S26245. Troop C attached to COB.

4. Assistance from Supporting Units.

a. These consisted of other division troops namely CCA and COB both of whom were prepared to support the Squadron in the event of an enemy breakthrough in this area.

5. No special weapons used.

6. Communications - Radio silence for tactical purposes was in effect throughout the month. All normal communication by wire and liaison agents.

7. Supply and evacuation - Normal.

8. Summation

a. The month was quite inactive, there being no enemy contact and the entire sector generally quiet. Troops were rested and vehicular maintenance was brought up to par.

b. A number of cases of trench foot were uncovered and a total of thirteen men evacuated because of it. A continuing effort is being made to educate the troops in so-called preventative measures but it is believed that the ultimate solution lies in 100% issue of overshoes to troops.

SECTION III - Summary of Strength and Casualties, November 1944.

	Asgd Strength 1 Nov			Asgd Strength 30 Nov		
	OFF	WO	EM	OFF	WO	EM
Headquarters	9	1	46	9	1	46
Headquarters & Service Troop	3	2	78	3	2	78
Troop A	4	0	131	4	0	132
Troop B	4	0	133	4	0	129
Troop C	4	0	133	4	0	125
Troop D	4	0	137	4	0	133
Troop E	3	0	103	4	0	99
Company F	5	0	89	5	0	86
Medical Detachment	2	0	12	2	0	12
TOTALS	38	3	862	41	3	840

CASUALTIES (85th-)	OFF	WO	EM
	Killed	0	0
Wounded	0	0	6
Known Captured	0	0	0
Missing	0	0	0
TOTALS	0	0	7

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Enemy Prisoners of War Captured by Our Forces: 0.

SECTION IV - COMMANDING OFFICERS November 1944.

**Squadron Commander: 1 November 1944 to 30 November 1944 - MAJOR
GEORGE C. BENJAMIN, 023422, Cavalry.**

**HEADQUARTERS & SERVICE TROOP: 1 November 1944 to 30 November 1944 -
CAPTAIN PAUL O. PETERSON, 01010111, Cavalry.**

**TROOP A: 1 November 1944 to 1200, 24 November 1944 - 1ST LT. FRED
A. FORSGREN, 01010173, Cavalry.**

**1200, 24 November 1944 to 30 November 1944 - CAPTAIN
SEYMOUR B. SCOTT, 0306958, Cavalry.**

**TROOP B: 1 November 1944 to 30 November 1944 - CAPTAIN KENNETH M.
HAYES, 01010128, Cavalry.**

**TROOP C: 1 November 1944 to 30 November 1944 - 1ST LT. GEORGE W.
BASQUEZ, 01012910, Cavalry.**

**TROOP D: 1 November 1944 to 30 November 1944 - 1ST LT. EDWARD J.
MC GANN, 01012641, Cavalry.**

**TROOP E: 1 November 1944 to 30 November 1944 - 1ST LT. PETER M.
SOUTTER, 01012549, Cavalry.**

**COMPANY F: 1 November 1944 to 30 November 1944 - CAPTAIN JOHN T.
SCHWARZ, 01010396, Cavalry.**

**MEDICAL DETACHMENT: 1 November 1944 to 30 November 1944 - CAPTAIN
MEYER FRIEDENTHAL, 0482804, Medical Corps.**

George C. Benjamin
GEORGE C. BENJAMIN,
Major, Cavalry
Commanding.

- 3 Incls.**
Incl 1 - Unit Journal.
**Incl 2 - File of Incoming and
Outgoing Messages.**

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Auth: Ltr 5th AD 19 Dec 44
Date: 3 January 1948
Init: *PH*

HEADQUARTERS
85TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON MECHANIZED
APO 255

3 January 1948

REPORT AFTER ACTION AGAINST THE ENEMY
(Reference: Par 19, AR 345-105, C3)

NOVEMBER 1944

SECTION I - The Enemy and Elements Affecting Action.

1. Enemy Situation.

a. Estimate of enemy opposing force - During the period 11 - 22 December 1944, the enemy held the sector opposing our attack with estimated two (2) battalions of 941 Infantry Regiment and two (2) battalions of 6th Parachute Regiment supported by estimated five (5) battalions artillery and unknown number of 80mm and 120mm mortars. At least one platoon of Mark V tanks was also used by the enemy in his defense. Enemy was well trained and extremely accurate in his artillery and mortar fire and seemed to have an abundance of ammunition. Morale of troops was only fair but they were aggressive and not disposed to surrender readily.

b. Enemy made liberal use of anti-tank mines in likely avenues of approach and in one instance improvised mines out of 80mm mortar shells. Enemy was well dug in with overhead cover to withstand our artillery. However in one instance after a heavy concentration of artillery he withdrew from his dug in positions under cover of darkness although his dug in positions were effective against his shelling when we took over his positions.

c. The enemy continuously pounded our positions with artillery and mortar and interdicted our MSR. He was very allergic to tanks and the approach of one of our tanks invariably resulted in extremely heavy concentration of artillery.

(1) Enemy air was quite active but seemed content with reconnaissance only and at a fairly high altitude due to our anti-aircraft fire.

(2) The only employment of enemy armor was estimated one platoon of Mark V tanks with about a company of infantry which attacked our road block. At the beginning of the attack the infantry preceded the tanks but upon receiving our small arms fire, the infantry withdrew behind the tanks which then moved up to the houses our troops were occupying and at very close range fired at the houses with 75 AP shells. This proved ineffective and our troops were able to repel the attack by use of small arms fire, anti-tank grenades and artillery. In

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this attack it was found that our rifle grenade firing from a range of 75 yards effectively pierced the rear plate and turret of the Mark V tank but a direct hit from a 105 Howitzer did not stop another Mark V tank but did convince the crew that it was time to withdraw. The enemy made repeated attempts to bring troops and vehicles past our block and it was found that 105 fire particularly of battalion volleys forced them to withdraw. The total damage to enemy vehicles during the period of this road block was the following destroyed: one (1) Mark V tank, one (1) SP gun, two (2) Half-tracks, one (1) trailer and one (1) Staff car. Damage to vehicles by artillery was not ascertained.

(3) Enemy infantry attempted a reconnaissance in force with a final mission to take high ground held by our Troop "B". The enemy force of estimated one platoon attacked from two directions along a draw around the hill. The attack was launched at dawn after a heavy artillery and mortar concentration. The enemy was not very aggressive and failed to follow his artillery closely with the result that our artillery and small arms fire stopped his probing at the source. No further attempts were made by the enemy to take this hill.

d. Elements affecting actions: Source of most information about enemy dispositions was aerial photos and PW information both of which proved adequate, accurate and complete except for location of enemy artillery about which very little accurate information was obtained. Difficulty was experienced in locating enemy mortars even though the sound could be heard. Enemy kept himself well informed of our disposition by observation from high ground across the river.

2. Terrain and Weather.

a. The terrain involved in our operation was hilly and wooded and because of the wet condition of the ground, use of vehicles on secondary roads was difficult and cross country movement of vehicles was impossible. The M-5 light tank and the Carrier personnel, M-29 were the only vehicles that could be used to supply the front line troops.

3. Civilian population.

a. There were no civilians in the area of our attack but in the period before the attack (vicinity of VanWegen) and after the attack (vicinity Hoof, Belgium), civilian circulation was difficult to control due to the failure of CAC and AMG to have a standardized identification system. It was found necessary to arrest a number of civilians and take them back to their homes to determine identity. None of the civilians however proved to be dangerous or violators of any regulations.

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SECTION II - Action.

1. 1 December 1944 the Squadron was still in Division reserve in vicinity of HUPPEN, Belgium.

a. 2 December 1944 moved to new division assembly area vicinity VENWEGEN, Germany with GP at 928355. D troop was attached to OCA and C troop to CCR. No mission assigned Squadron during period till 10 December 1944. D troop reverted to Squadron control 5 December 1944.

b. 10 December 1944 Squadron (minus Troop C) moved to assembly area vicinity KLEINHAU, Germany and prepared to execute mission under control of 4th Cavalry Group. GP at 039370.

c. 11 December 1944 Troop D attached directly to 759th Tank Battalion (part of 4th Cavalry Group) remainder of Squadron (minus Troop C) attached to 4th Cavalry Group.

d. 14 December 1944 Squadron (minus Troops C, D, E and F Company) control passes to CCB, 5th Armored Division. Location of Troops and GP unchanged.

e. 24 December 1944 Squadron (minus Troop C) having been relieved of mission by the 330th Infantry Regiment, 83rd Division, moved to new assembly area at HOOFF, Belgium (726800), and passed to division control.

f. 31 December 1944 - No change.

2. Mission.

a. The general mission assigned the Squadron was to seize and hold ground - in the case of Troop D operating under 759th Tank Battalion, to hold ground only since it was already cleared of enemy (though still under heavy enemy fire); in the case of Troops A and B to both seize and hold a series of objectives. The remainder of the Squadron (minus C Troop) acted in a supporting role to these troops.

b. Troop C attached to CCR, 5th Armored Division performed similar missions under direction of that headquarters the objectives being the towns of BRANDENBURG and BERGSTEIN, both in Germany.

3. Plan of Action.

a. Troop D held section of wooded nose east of KLEINHAU, Germany (see S-3 overlay, 10 Dec 44) from 11 to 21 December 1944. Severe losses were suffered by this troop due to constant enemy artillery and mortar fire which continued unabated throughout their stay in this sector.

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B. Troops A and B were initially assigned a flank security mission for the advance of CCB on objectives #1 to 3 (see FO#22, Hq 4th Cav Gp, dated 10 Dec 44, and accompanying overlay). This mission was changed and the two troops took part in the initial assault on Objectives #1 and 2 and assaulted and held Objective #3 without support from other troops, except for tanks furnished by 81st Tank Battalion. All three missions were successful against moderate enemy resistance.

C. Subsequently it became the mission of Troop A (minus one platoon) to establish a road block at 103375 between the towns of WINDEN and OBERMAUBACH and to prevent enemy movement between these towns until supporting infantry cleared them of enemy. As planned this operation was to take one day 21 December 1944. Actually the town of WINDEN was not taken and the town of OBERMAUBACH remained in enemy hands until 23 December 1944. Troop A maintained their position and were successful in their mission despite repeated attempt on the part of the enemy to break through and reinforce their troops to the South. The troop was highly commended for their fine performance by both the CO of CCB and CG, 5th Armored Division.

4. Troop C attached to CCR, 5th Armored Division. While few details are known concerning their activities during the month it is known that the Commanding Officer, Troop C successfully commanded a company of medium tanks and a company of infantry as well as his own troop in the attack on BERGSTEIN when commanding officers of both units became casualties and for this action has been recommended for the Silver Star award and for a battle-field promotion to the rank of captain.

5. Troop E gave general support to the division attack from vicinity KLEINIAU until an acute shortage of ammunition forced them to cease fire.

6. Company F supported both Troops A and B as well as Troop D in their operations. The terrain conditions and intense enemy artillery and mortar fire throughout the entire sector precluded any possibility of supply and evacuation being carried on in the usual fashion and by vehicles ordinarily used for these purposes. The tanks of Company F took over such necessary details with success and throughout the action were able to keep the line troops supplied with rations, water, ammunition and other needs. They also evacuated casualties to the aid stations. It is believed however that "weasels" would be excellent for this purpose.

7. Since arrival in the present location troops have gone out on daily reconnaissance missions covering the areas South to MALMEDY - West to LIEGE and North to HEERLEN - MAASTRICHT. Mission has been to provide necessary prior information for the advance of the division in any of these directions.

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8. Special Weapons used - No new or special weapons were used.

9. Communication.

a. 509 radios were used by line troops since terrain conditions made it impossible to bring vehicles forward. Light tanks from Company F furnished relay stations to the Squadron CP. Communications were not satisfactory on the whole. The batteries in the SCR 509 having too short a life and the relay system too slow, particularly when calling for and adjusting artillery.

b. Sound power phones and runners were also used between the line troops, principally for lateral contact.

10. Assistance from supporting units.

a. Outstanding in this category is the 71st Field Artillery, who did a superior job for us - their fire was highly accurate and effective and inflicted considerable losses on the enemy as well as breaking up a counter-attack against our positions several times.

11. Use of Grenades, Flame throwers, etc.

a. Troop A used the rifle grenade with excellent results. A Mark V tank was knocked out from a distance of 75 yards by hits on the turret and rear. Two SP guns also were destroyed by the same method. The troops have great confidence in the rifle grenade placing it even higher in their estimation than the bazooka.

12. Supply and Evacuation - As stated in previous narrative (see Co. F).

13. Casualties

a. Troops A and B and in particular Troop D suffered heavy losses in key personnel. Of the casualties a high percentage were high ranking non-commissioned officers and officers. All three troops have had a difficult task of re-organization to do and Troop D will require a long period to recover its former high standard of combat efficiency.

14. SUMMATION

a. In these missions our troops assumed the role of infantry and because it is anticipated by this headquarters that this will be the rule rather than the exception from now on, an alternate T/O has been worked out. (see attached T/O).

b. In an infantry role, our troops are seriously handicapped by insufficient manpower. The reconnaissance platoon is comprised of only twenty-eight men and one officer and even with the "new" T/O

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is hardly strong enough to perform typical infantry assignments. Also if all three platoons are used as they must be for most jobs no troop reserve remains which we consider highly undesirable but also difficult to avoid.

c. Aerial photos were a great aid in preplanning all phases of the operations. When grid squares have been drawn on they are the perfect means of accurate reporting.

d. Medical aid. -

STATEMENT BY MEYER FRIEDENTHAL, Captain, Squadron Surgeon "A major evacuation problem arose when the squadron was highly mobile. The troops, operating on wide and distant fronts, depended solely on the two aid men attached and their single one quarter ton truck for evacuation. In most instances the aid station and its ambulance was too far away to be of practical value. Thus long distance transportation was required in an open vehicle, subjecting the wounded not only to violent passage but to exposure to the elements also. At the same time the troop was bereft of all medical support during their absence.

Even in situations where the reconnaissance troops were operating in areas close to the aid station, the fact that the Medical Detachment has but one ambulance with which to evacuate the total squadron casualties, I was loathe to use it for evacuation back to the aid station from the troops.

When the squadron was in a static situation, dug in and under mortar and artillery fire incessantly, peeps were found to be unsatisfactory for evacuation purposes. No protection of any type is given the injured or the medical personnel.

When operating with a Combat Command in a static position, I feel I need a medical plan for evacuation made clear to me through the Combat Command Surgeon so that I may relay this important information to the troops.

In conclusion I suggest an increase in number of medical personnel to twenty-eight men and addition of a half-track ambulance would do much to effect prompt medical evacuation."

e. It was found that preplanning of supply is most important, and that a representative of S-4 must be on hand at all times during the action to co-ordinate between the line troops and the rear as well as to keep an accurate accounting of status of supply. Since all items were delivered under constant fire it has been decided that in the future they will be lashed to the delivering vehicle in such a manner that they can be quickly cut and dropped to the ground to be picked up by intrenched troops when enemy fire lifts.

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SECTION III - Summary of Strength and Casualties, December 1944.

	Asgd Strength 1 Dec			Asgd Strength 31 Dec		
	<u>OFF</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>MI</u>	<u>OFF</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>MI</u>
Headquarters	9	1	46	9	1	46
Headquarters & Service Troop	3	2	78	3	2	75
Troop A	6	0	132	4	0	106
Troop B	4	0	129	4	0	108
Troop C	4	0	126	4	0	127
Troop D	4	0	134	4	0	85
Troop E	4	0	100	5	0	99
Company F	5	0	86	4	0	86
Medical Detachment	2	0	12	2	0	12
TOTALS	41	3	843	39	3	744
CASUALTIES (85th-)	OFF	WO	MI			
Killed	0	0	17			
Wounded	1	0	73			
Missing	0	0	1			
Captured	0	0	0			
TOTALS	1	0	91			

Enemy Prisoners of War captured by Our Forces: 17.

SECTION IV - COMMANDING OFFICERS - December 1944.

Squadron Commander: 1 December 1944 to 31 December 1944 - Major GEORGE C. BENJAMIN, 023422, Cavalry.

HEADQUARTERS & SERVICE TROOP: 1 December 1944 to 31 December 1944 - Captain PAUL O. PETERSON, 01010111, Cavalry.

TROOP A: 1 December 1944 to 31 December 1944 - Captain SYMOUR B. SCOTT, 0306938, Cavalry.

TROOP B: 1 December 1944 to 26 December 1944 - Captain KENNETH M. HAYES, 01010128, Cavalry.

0900 26 December 1944 to 31 December 1944 - 1ST LT. LOREN L. VIFOND, 01012532, Cavalry.

TROOP C: 1 December 1944 to 31 December 1944 - 1ST LT. GEORGE W. BASQUEZ, 01012910, Cavalry.

TROOP D: 1 December 1944 to 1830 14 December 1944 - 1ST LT. EDWARD J. MC GARR, 01012549, Cavalry.

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1630 14 December 1944 to 0900 25 December 1944 - Captain
PATRICK J. BURNS, JR, 01010401, Cavalry.

0900 25 December 1944 to 31 December 1944 - 1ST LT.
EDWARD J. MC GANN, 01012549, Cavalry.

TROOP B : 1 December 1944 to 31 December 1944 - 1ST LT. PETER W.
SOUTH R, 01012549, Cavalry.

COMPANY F : 1 December 1944 to 31 December 1944 - Captain JOHN T.
SCHWAB, 01010396, Cavalry.

MEDICAL DETACHMENT : 1 December 1944 to 31 December 1944 - Captain
MERRILL E. WENTHAL, 0425804, Medical Corps.

George C. Benjamin
GEORGE C. BENJAMIN,
Major, Cavalry,
Commanding.

- 2 Incls.
- Incl 1 - Unit Journal.
- Incl 2 - File of Incoming and
Outgoing Messages.

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S E C R E T
Auth: Ltr 5th AD 19 Dec 44
Date: 3 February 1945
Init: PEU

HEADQUARTERS

85TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON MECHANIZED
APO 255

DOWNGRADED TO:

CLASSIFICATION REMOVED
BY AUTHORITY OF THE [redacted]

4 February 1945

Feb 45
Date

HSO
Initials

REPORT AFTER ACTION AGAINST THE ENEMY
(Reference: Par 19, AR 345-105, C3)

JANUARY 1945 ✓

SECTION I - The Enemy and Elements Affecting Action.

- 1. **Enemy Situation.** - This Squadron not in contact.
- 2. **Terrain and Weather.** - Not material.

3. **Civilian population.** - Civilians were generally cooperative but had not been well instructed on the rules and regulations governing their conduct and hence were held by our road blocks on an average of six to eight per day for clarification of their status. A lack of an SOP for civilians in liberated countries and failure of competent authority to disseminate local rules and regulations are believed to be the cause for this difficulty.

a. In the towns of Hombourg, Gemmenich and Plombieres it was necessary for this Squadron to virtually assume the government of these communities in order to have a uniform plan of government which would permit civilians to continue their normal pursuits and still maintain proper counterintelligence measures.

b. In these towns too, there were over 500 carrier pigeons in about 40 different lofts. No regulation of this system of communication had been instituted and at the close of the period this squadron, on its own initiative was formulating a plan for registration and control of these birds, the plan to be submitted to higher headquarters for approval. In the interim an immediate regulation was promulgated directing that pigeons will not be released from lofts.

c. Identification of German nationals, evacuated to these towns presented a problem because of the previous failure to enforce the wearing of the yellow brassard. Spot checks to enforce this regulation were immediately instituted with good results but the presence of German nationals in close proximity to troops and installations leaves open a definite loophole in effective counterintelligence measures.

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d. Black market operations in illegal spirits and trading in U. S. Army rations and cigarettes was prevalent in the towns of Plombieres, Hombourg and Gemmenich. It was evident that very little or no attempt had been made to stop these operations as civilian enforcement agencies were inadequate and Military agencies for reasons unknown had not acted. This Squadron at the close of the period was investigating the problem and since warnings and orders were ineffective, it was planned to refer the matter to higher headquarters for action.

SECTION II - Action.

1. a. The squadron remained under division control throughout the month, located at Hoor, Belgium (726800) until 28 January when a move was made to a new area SW of AACHEN, Squadron Command Post being located in the town of PLOMBIERES (747391).

b. No supporting units.

2. Mission. -

a. No mission was assigned the Squadron during the period, unless the usual preparation for future operations and the continuance of training can be called such.

3. Special weapons used. - None.

4. Communications. - Not applicable.

5. Assistance from supporting units. - None.

6. Use, etc. - None.

7. Supply, etc. - Not applicable.

8. Casualties. - No battle casualties.

SECTION III - Summary of Strength and Casualties, January 1945.

	Asgd Strength 1 Jan			Asgd Strength 31 Jan		
	OFF	WO	ML	OFF	WO	ML
Headquarters	9	1	46	9	1	44
Headquarters & Service	3	2	75	3	2	73
Troop A	4	0	106	4	0	130
Troop B	4	0	108	3	0	128
Troop C	4	0	127	5	0	123
Troop D	4	0	85	4	0	124
Troop E	5	0	99	6	0	97
Company F	4	0	86	5	0	87
Medical Detachment	2	0	12	2	0	12
	<u>39</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>744</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>328</u>

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No casualties.

Enemy Prisoners of War captured by our Forces: None

SECTION IV - COMMANDING OFFICERS- January 1945.

Squadron Commander: 1 January 1945 to 31 January 1945 - Major GEORGE C. BENJAMIN, O23422, Cavalry.

HEADQUARTERS & SERVICE TROOP : 1 January 1945 to 31 January 1945 - Captain PAUL O. PETERSON, O1010111, Cavalry.

TROOP A : 1 January 1945 to 31 January 1945 - Captain SEYMOUR B. SCOTT, O3C6938, Cavalry.

TROOP B : 1 January 1945 to 31 January 1945 - Captain LOREN L. VIFORD, O1012532, Cavalry.

TROOP C : 1 January 1945 to 31 January 1945 - Captain GEORGE C. BASQUEZ, O1012910, Cavalry.

TROOP D : 1 January 1945 to 31 January 1945 - 1ST LT. EDWARD J. MC GANN, O1012549, Cavalry.

TROOP E : 1 January 1945 to 31 January 1945 - 1ST LT. PETER M. SOUTTER, O1012549, Cavalry.

COMPANY F : 1 January 1945 to 31 January 1945 - Captain JOHN T. SCHWARTZ, O1010396, Cavalry.

MEDICAL DETACHMENT : 1 January 1945 to 31 January 1945 - Captain MEYER FRIEDMANTAL, O425804, Medical Corps.

Incls.

Incl 1 - Unit Journal.

Incl 2 - File of Incoming and
Outgoing Messages.

George C. Benjamin
GEORGE C. BENJAMIN,
Major, Cavalry,
Commanding.

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Unit History

**HEADQUARTERS
88TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON MECHANIZED
APO 255**

12 January 1945

Subject: Letter of Transmittal.

**To : Commanding General, 8th Armored Division, APO 255,
U. S. Army. (Attention: Ass't G of S, G - 1).**

In accordance with letter, Headquarters 8th Armored Division, subject: "Unit Citation, French, dated 9 January 1945, herewith is forwarded recommendation for the following organization:

Troop A, 88th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized.

**GEORGE C. BENJAMIN,
Major, Cavalry,
Commanding.**

**1 Encl - Unit Citation
(Troop A, 88th Cav Recon Sq Mech).**

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FRANK DANIELS
FIRST UNIT, 1ST T. ARMT
APO 230

12 January 1945

Subject: Galt Citeaux, French.
To : Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force, APO 787 (Main).
THRU : Commanding General, 12th Army Group, APO 855.

1. In accordance with the provisions of Letter, Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force, File AG 200,62-1 GAF-AGW, 5 Subject: "Galt Citeaux", dated 7 December 1944, and Letter, Headquarters 12th Army Group, File 200,6 (0-1), Subject: "Galt Citeaux", 1 January 1945, it is recommended that the following unit be cited in the _____ orders of the French Army:

Troop "A", 85th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized.

2. Date and complete narrative of citation:

On 15 December 1944, at 0800 A, Troop "A", 85th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized, whose fighting strength was 102 enlisted men, 5 officers and 2 medical aid men, was committed to action in the sector directly east of KLINGEN, Germany. Troop "A" was a part of the force made up of the 5th Armored Division plus 2nd Battalion, 850th Infantry Regiment and the 4th Cavalry Group.

The general plan of action was to clear the Germans from the wooded high ground north and east of WITTKENBACH, Germany then to reduce and occupy the following towns west of the Hoer River: WINDEN, WITTKENBACH, OTHENBACH, and BOHLEN, Germany.

Opposing our troops in this sector were the following enemy troops:

- A. 21st Infantry Regiment consisting of 3 battalions each of a strength of 200 - 300 men.
- B. 6th Parachute Regiment consisting of 3 or 4 battalions, each of a strength of 600 - 700 men.
- C. Detached 15 battalions of light artillery and 5 batteries of medium artillery covering the corps sector.
- D. 15 to 20 self-propelled, high muzzle velocity, 75 millimeter and 88 millimeter guns.
- E. Detached 1 company (12 - 150 millimeter mortars) from an Army mortar battalion.
- F. An unknown number of anti-tank guns, tanks and 80 millimeter mortars.

Enemy regimental command posts were located in KRIBBU and WINNEN from which two towns the enemy had disposed his forces so as to defend the towns, UFTENMARBACH, OBERMARBACH and the high ground along the Roer River in the vicinity of these towns. Most of the enemy artillery installations were on the east side of the Roer River where also it was believed the enemy had additional reserves including armor.

The 85th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized less Troops "C", "D", "E" and three platoons of Company "F" was assigned the mission of protecting the right flank of an attack by Combat Command "B" on the heavily wooded high ground 1000 yards north of UFTENMARBACH, should the main body of attacking infantry forces fail to attain their objective the 85th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized (-) was to attack through them onto the objective.

The sector of attack was seized and the ground held in spite of a heavy pounding by enemy artillery and mortars. The cavalry troops, with cavalry weapons, had fought as infantry across open terrain onto their objective.

Throughout the night plans were coordinated for an attack by Troops of the "85th" on the following morning. The objective was to be another wooded hill-top (#255) 1000 yards east toward the river. Seven medium tanks were placed in support of the Squadron.

At 0800 16 December 1944 the attack jumped off led by five tanks on which men of the third platoon, Troop "A" were mounted. The remaining platoons of the troops with those of Troop "A" leading immediately to the rear of the tanks were deployed in depth by platoons, with 50 yard intervals. As the troops moved by the village of BILSTEIN the tanks sprayed the windows and doors. Enemy action was anticipated from this flank but there was none. Moving onto the objective the troops saw about 20 enemy retreat from the hill crest. Ten enemy infantrymen had been left on the hill for the purpose of covering the withdrawal of about 2 platoons. Of these ten, five were killed and five were taken prisoners. The speed of the assault across the open terrain had routed the enemy who were armed with rifles and light machine guns.

With Troop "A" occupying the right sector and Troop "B" the left all men began to dig in rapidly. By the time most men had dug themselves a fox hole the artillery began to pound their position. Little available cover was to be had from trees and air bursts because time did not allow construction of roofs for their holes. Men caught out-side of their shelters attempting to cut timbers were sure to be a shell fragment casualty. In spite of this, during the afternoon and evening of the first day most foxholes were provided with overhead logs and earth.

On 17 and 18 December 1944 two counter-attacks were launched by the enemy against our position and the artillery and mortar fire was increased in tempo. The first counter-attack began in the morning daylight hours. Out of 20 to 25 enemy who probed our positions seven were captured and 12 to 15 were killed. In the second counter-attack our troops found 15 to 20 of the enemy within 10 to 30 feet of our outposts throwing hand grenades at daylight same. Others attempted unsuccessfully to come in by way of the fire trench but they were stopped by our own grenades. The entire attack was unsuccessful because of our accurate fire which caught the enemy in the open, and drove them back down the hill. Our guns killed at least 10 to 15 of them.

The enemy artillery was terrific during the 17, 18 and 19 December. Mortars joined the barrage on the 17 December and shells were constantly whistling and smashing around and on top of the fox-holes. Their artillery was extremely accurate. On one light machine gun emplacement formed by two trenches shaping a "V" steady hits began to fall within 5 to ten feet. One man was in each leg of the V. The hits came closer and closer. Finally one round smashed between the two trenches, splintered many logs and caved in the sides.

At another instance during the early stages of the shelling an enemy shell struck directly in a fire trench. As a result one man was completely dismembered, seven others were seriously and slightly wounded.

Heavy woods had covered the high top when the troops had seized the location. By the time the shelling had continued for 2 or 3 days the trees were battered and splintered and the forest offered no arboreal cover or concealment.

Many of the more hastily constructed fox-holes had been struck directly, the logs splintered, smashed and the pieces thrown high into the air. Constant pounding by the barrage on better constructed dugouts did not have much effect except to jar the occupants.

It seemed that their position was fated to bear the brunt of every German piece of artillery within the most extreme ranges. Every slight or obvious movement of troops in the entire sector opposite WINDEN to UNTERMAUBACH was sure to draw a new onslaught on this prominent hill position. By a closely estimated count it was determined that during a six hour period on 20 December 1944 1500 enemy shells had burst within the area of an acre and one half. A field artillery forward observer estimated that 2000 to 3000 rounds burst in this same area in one day.

Troop "B", during the period 18 December 1944 to 1. December 1944 suffered 15 casualties including one (1) killed. Troop "A", quite obviously more more mauled than Troop "B", had a total of 52 men evacuated as casualties from the line and three (3) killed during the same period.

At this point it seemed that the morale of the troops was at the breaking point. Even the most steady hands were trembling, even the most experienced and battle hardened were becoming tremendously weary. The grueling task of lying there and taking such a steady, tremendous pounding without the relief of getting on their feet and fighting back was proving to be extremely nerve shattering.

Then, at 1505 on 19 December 1944, Troop "A" was given a new mission.

The main supply route and only road for the enemy to reinforce his troops at UNTERMAUBACH, OBERMAUBACH and BUCHHEIM, from WINDEN and north was the highway immediately north and west of the Saar River. This highway was a direct artery from WINDEN south to UNTERMAUBACH. There were enemy held garriisons in all of the above mentioned towns. This highway was a vital link, it being very much in enfilade from our positions to the north.

Our general plan of action was this: To seize all of these towns, and by swiftly severing the highway between ILSH and UNT MAUBACH to prevent reinforcements, be they troops, armor, ammunition, or food from reaching the enemy at the main points of contact: UNT MAUBACH, OBERMAUBACH and BORNH.

Troop "A", less one platoon, was to move southwest about 1000 yards, over and down a steep cliff-like precipice, and to seize both ends on this highway. They were to hold this as a block against all force the enemy could throw at them. When UNT MAUBACH had been taken they could be relieved.

Prisoner of War reports later indicated that UNT MAUBACH was being held by 1st Infantry Regiment, about 400 in strength. It was expected that unknown numbers of enemy guns could be brought to bear on the position from a block from across the Hoer River. High ground immediately south of the river commanded the point with tremendous advantages.

The enemy controlled the steep precipice down which Troop "A" had to proceed, there being low, tangled underbrush completely covering this slope giving untold advantages to the Germans when they might completely cut off the Troop, once we had gained access to our position.

There could be no evacuation of the wounded from the block and it was not expected that there could be any possible communication or supply or communication by radio.

It was on the 20 December 1944 that Combat Command "A" was to take WINDEN, the 2nd Battalion 850th Infantry Regiment was to take UNT MAUBACH, the 4th Cavalry Squadron was to take OBERMAUBACH, but the drive was to be hinged on the supposition that the 4th Cavalry Squadron would first take the town of BORNH to settle stage for further advances.

It was on the 20 December 1944 that Troop "A" was to seize the main block and hold firmly until relieved from the west. It was anticipated that Troop "A" could be entirely relieved sometime on that same day.

A force of 50 enlisted men, 4 officers and 2 attached medical men departed from hill #255 at 0630 20 December 1944. Their weapons for the mission were as follows:

- 4 M-1 rifles with adapters for grenade launchers
- 5 submachine guns (m-3)
- 10 Carbines
- 26 M-1 rifles
- 3 Light machine guns
- Grenades
- Anti-tank grenades.

This force had existed on 1/2 "K" ration per day for the preceding 4 days. They were to exist on 1/3 "K" rations per day in the subsequent 3 days. They carried no blankets.

Of this entire force of 45 men and officers all had a grievous battle wound since occupation of hill #255 on 16 December 1944, but had not been evacuated.

The darkness of the early morning was to provide the cover for the advance. If the line of enemy outposts along the so called precipice could be kept ignorant of the movement all would go well. The troop moved in column down the gentle slope away from the hill's summit until the head came to the steep descent. There they veered to the left about 50 feet then began the descent down the slope. They had to move slowly and cautiously - every step seemed to cause enough rustling and shuffling of rocks and brush to alert enemy outposts within a mile. But no contact was made.

When at the base of the descent the troop split into four squads. Two squads from the Headquarters and the 2nd Platoon were to seize and occupy the large house near the road. Two squads from the third platoon were to seize and occupy the smaller house farther from the road.

Each pair of squads advanced on a house from two sides and upon reaching found no occupants.

Immediately defenses were set up in each house by posting guards at all windows and doors plus one machine gun post in the rear of the Troop CP. It was obvious that one vulnerable sector was their rear, to the north, which was commanded by the steep cliff, only a matter of 100 to 150 yards from either house. Enemy infantry could cause much trouble by climbing above the position on this hill, covered by brush and boulders and sniping from there.

At about 0750 seven German infantry straggled past the house entirely oblivious of the danger. When they were directly in front of the CP they were cut down by rifle fire. Three fell where they were. The others ran to the wall which was in front of the house and knelt there.

An enemy vehicle, a loaded full-track ammunition vehicle towing another behind it, approached from the west. The men behind the stone wall waved a warning signal the driver to stop where he was but this was to no avail. The driver stopped the vehicle directly in front of the CP. Our machine gun from the front door of the CP set the vehicle and ammunition on fire. The driver was killed by rifle fire after he got out of the vehicle. Then one of our men bounced a grenade against the side of the vehicle fairly into the faces of the Germans behind the wall. This action killed two. Then one of our riflemen crept around a gully a few feet west of the Troop CP. Here he discovered, shot and killed the remaining two Germans.

At 0750 an enemy staff car occupied by two men approached from the west. When the car was within 100 yards it was smashed by a burst of machine gun bullets, killing the driver and injuring the other occupant.

Things were comparatively quiet for a time, but an enemy shell smashed a water pipe in the basement of the CP. Water spread over the floor.

About 1000 the fog lifted and the tempo of the artillery was stepped up. Plaster was rained down from the ceiling. Slate sprayed up like a roof like a erupting volcano. However the dust and explosion shells did not protect a squad of enemy infantrymen as they changed positions along a ledge to the rear of the CP. Riflemen stayed at their line with snipers, with good effect, at every enemy unit. Three to five Germans advanced up the


road from the west and attempted to snipe from the base of the hill about 100 yards from the houses. Our own sniper killed at least three of our position alone.

At noon an enemy tank or self-propelled gun pulled up in position on a commanding hill across the river about 1000 yards to the southwest. Three direct hits were registered on the second story of the CP house and our man was killed instantly at his post, by this gun. It was the house to the east, but it was thoroughly ventilated when the barrage finally lifted.

At 1500 the enemy attacked in force with armor. Apparently 100 infantry, 3 Mark V tanks and one half-track approached from direction of the river, apparently in an effort to reinforce the garrisons to the west.

Our radio operator called for artillery on a pre-arranged point on a curve in the highway in the path of the attack. The enemy force moved past the artillery concentration point and still we had had no artillery support. At this time an adjustment of fire was called from the platoon CP to the Troop CP where the radio was in operation. They had to adjust and shorten the range so that fire could be brought down the road to the west.

The first Mark V approached slowly with about 75 infantry behind it. As it approached our artillery began pounding just off the road to the rear of the enemy. Again the artillery correction was shouted from the house to the other, then relayed over the radio. There was no immediate effect.

As the first tank passed by the platoon CP rifle grenades were fired from both houses into the rear armor turret. (Point A - see sketch ). There were at least 3 hits. Later inspection showed that the grenades had blown the tank gunner to bits. The tank commander scrambled out of the turret and was killed in the road. The driver got out but was wounded while running down the road toward the other German tanks.

By this time the infantry had deployed across the orchard east of the third platoon CP on a line approximately 100 yards long. The third platoon leader heard the lead tank commence firing - when the house shook and plaster rained down. Two men were injured by the HE shells. He ordered all men of his platoon to leave the small house and go to the trenches in the back yard. He kept one corporal with him in the house. The enemy took the cue - they assumed all our men had left the house, so they began to advance rapidly on the platoon CP - with one officer and one enlisted man inside the house. Meanwhile the tank had fired three rounds directly into the house in an effort to cover the infantry attack.

The officer and man fired as rapidly as possible. Their targets were in the open and coming in fast. One enemy squad tried to set up a bazooka. A rifle grenade to their midst broke that up instantly. Three Germans approached far to the rear of the house at the base of the slope and had their machine gun set up prepared to fire. Our rifles killed all three of them on the spot.

The enemy were killed as fast as they charged. One reached the walls but was shot there. One man ran up to a hole in the wall, jumped into the house and raised his gun to fire, but he was shot in the hand before he could pull the trigger.

The attack was repulsed. There were at least 40 to 50 enemy dead up to this stage in the battle, strewn in the field and on the road.

The remnants of the enemy force gathered about the second tank regrouping to attack again. Suddenly our artillery plucked a heavy shell directly on the tank about which the enemy were gathered. This completely demoralized their second attack and when several more rounds landed close their losses became too heavy for them.

The artillery adjustment was the direct result of accurate correction given after the initial rounds had missed their advancing target.

The tanks were faced about rapidly and the vehicles and men retired around the bend toward WILSON.

The total enemy losses by this attack were 60 to 80, plus six prisoners locked in the basement of the platoon CP.

Both houses were burning on their upper floors as a result of the tank fire and this caused such consternation and took time to extinguish. The third platoon CP burned for about 4 hours before it was finally put out with sand and plaster.

Our casualties for the day amounted to one killed and four wounded.

That evening a carrying party made its way against small arms and mortar fire of enemy outposts behind the CP to the position and 10 mines were brought in, plus ammunition and "K" rations.

One officer and two men laid these mines in front of the Troop CP amongst the enemy equipment and bodies lying on the road. This together with the tank and burned out vehicles formed a very effective block of the road. There were also booby traps laid to the rear of the CP to prevent infiltration from the north.

By the end of the day no word or sight was had of the relieving forces attacking UNTERMAUBACH.

On 21 December 1944 there were no concerted enemy attacks; there was a continually developing siege of enemy sniping from the east and northwest from a distance of about 100 to 200 yards. In addition sporadic heavy artillery dropped within 10 to 15 yards of the two houses, and throughout the entire siege the enemy used effectively a small mortar, thought to be even smaller in caliber than a 60 millimeter mortar.

During the day, about eleven enemy were spotted in an infiltration to a hillside park west of the Troop Command Post over a period of several hours. Enemy snipers were killed near the base of the precipices; many other probable kills were sighted behind a haystack and, nearby, a small red brick building about 100 yards northwest.

During the day our own artillery shelled UNTERMAUBACH heavily. Also, from this rear block Command Post our observer spotted 10 to 20 enemy entering a wooded portion of the high ground directly across the river. Upon request a terrific artillery pounding was given and entire area is also under heavy mortar fire as noted in the report made previously.

Our own infantry forces did not clean UNTERSMARBACH on this day and our tanks reportedly retired from vicinity of that town to the high ground to the north.

On 21 December 1944 there was no let up in the continued persistence of the enemy snipers. It was on this day that a daylight supply party attempted to force their way to the troop. The party of eight reached the bottom of the precipice. Before advancing across the open field to the troop CP it was decided that three would remain where they were and cover the advance of the others. The first five attempted to run for the house but one was shot and killed by the almost impassable hail of sniper fire that met them. The others reached the CP while the remaining three turned back to wait for darkness. However they did not return successfully during the hours of darkness.

In one instance a light tank starting from the Squadron CP attempted a run through BILSTEIN toward the Troop "A" position. Enemy anti-tank guns provided a block to this supply route and it had to be abandoned.

During the late afternoon guards in the troop CP could see our tanks and infantry in UNTERSMBACH and by radio our observers kept that attacking force well informed of the enemy movements at the eastern edge of the town. However there was no contact made with Troop "A" until approximately 2100 hours when the first squad of the relieving infantry arrived, having come down into the valley by the same route Troop "A" had used.

Finally, at midnight 21 December Troop "A" was relieved and they began the trek up the cliff toward the Squadron Command Post.

The casualties for the period 21 - 22 December 1944 were one killed, four wounded or injured.

The enemy had made no less than eight separate attempts to bring supplies and reinforcements including armor west toward UNTERSMBACH. The fact that reinforcements and supplies never reached the beleaguered enemy troops at UNTERSMBACH and caused the surrender of over 100 German troops was attested to by several German Prisoners of War who stated that they had received no supplies nor reinforcements since taking over the town. In fact, a premature shelling of UNTERSMBACH by the Germans while they, the enemy, still occupied the town was attributed to a failure of communications between the garrison and higher headquarters, that too, no doubt occasioned by our road block. As the effect of the road block was to contain the forces flushed from UNTERSMBACH by our coordinated attack. As the enemy attempted to move east from UNTERSMBACH he was met by our fire, no doubt by us or forced to return to the town where he was dealt with by our forces there.

Our position at the road block also enabled us to get at any enemy movement across the Roer River, particularly on the high hill directly opposite the town. We were able to direct effective artillery fire on these positions, driving off the enemy there. This hill was obviously being used by the enemy as an observation post from which to direct artillery.

3. Proposed citations:

Troop "A", 85th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized performed continuous acts of extraordinary heroism in Germany during the period 15 December 1944 to 22 December 1944.

During a series of attacks eastward from KL IMHAU, Germany onto high ground north of UNT IMBAUBACH, Troop "A" exhibited a remarkable adaptability to dismounted infantry tactics and were successful in seizure of their assigned sector, hill #258. In spite of a terrific barrage of enemy artillery and mortars and two determined counter-attacks Troop "A" held firmly their sector against overwhelming enemy fire power for a period of four days. On 19 December 1944, after having suffered 50% losses, the troop was assigned the mission of penetrating to the rear of the enemy outpost and severing the enemy's main supply and reinforcement route. The Troop, with 21 of its fighting strength slightly wounded, successfully cut the supply route and established a block of the road which they held for three days whereas the planned operation anticipated a relief for them during the first day. Although the troop was completely surrounded by strong enemy forces they decisively defeated a concerted tank-infantry attack thrice their strength using to defeat the enemy weapons no more powerful than anti-tank grenades. This small force of 4 officers and 41 enlisted men was responsible for an effective block which cut off large enemy forces from their base of supply and greatly facilitated the capture of these forces and the sector which they held. The troop held the road block until finally relieved by other friendly forces. The heroism and fighting determination of Troop "A" will be a stirring example to all and is in accordance with the highest traditions of our armed forces.

1 Incl (sketch)

COURTNEY H. HODGINS,
Lieutenant General, U. S. Army
Commanding.

Stamp

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CLASS: TOP SECRET
DATE: 4 Mar 48
INT: *TOP SECRET*

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HEADQUARTERS
8TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON MECHANIZED
APO No 886, U S Army

4 March 1948

SUBJECT: Letter of Transmittal.

TO : Commanding General, 5th Armored Division, APO No 886, U. S. Army.

Forwarded herewith Report After Action Against The Enemy for month of February 1948.

For the Squadron Commander:

PAUL E. HOBBS,
1st Lt, Cav
Adjutant

1 Encl.

605-7112

9553

SECRET
REF ID: A66757
DATE: 8 March 1946
INIT: *HSP*

**HEADQUARTERS
SEVENTH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON MORGANIZED
APO 252**

8 March 1946.

**REPORT AFTER ACTION AGAINST THE ENEMY
(Reference: PAR 19, AR 300-100, G-3)**

FEBRUARY 1945

SECTION I - The Enemy and Elements Affecting Action.

- 1. Enemy Situation - Not in contact.
- a. Elements affecting action: Not applicable.

SECTION II - Action.

- 1. a. The Squadron remained with the division throughout the month.
- b. Squads GP at Flobiers, Belgium (K 74731) from 25 January to 5 February 1945.
- GP at Barvier, Holland (K 73004) to 22 February 1945
- GP at Prulenberg, Germany (K 82422) to 27 February 1945
- GP at Netters, Germany (F 60000) to 1 March 1945.
- a. No supporting units during the period.
- 2. Mission - Negative
- 3. Special weapons used - Negative
- 4. Communications - Negative
- 5. Assistance from supporting units - Negative
- 6. Use of bayonet, flame thrower - Negative
- 7. Supply and Evacuation - Negative
- 8. Casualties - see Section III.

**UNCLASSIFIED TO:
CLASSIFICATION REMOVED
BY AUTHORITY OF TAG *LTC***

1 Feb 46 *HSP*
Date Initials



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See XI, PART II, 3 Mar 45, cont'd.

5. Summary - The bulk of the period was spent in training with continued emphasis on night operations.

On 28 Feb 45, troops A, B and C (with assault gun platoons attached to each) had been attached to OCA, OCS and OCN respectively. All have completed or are in the process of completing missions against the enemy.

The Squadron (- A, B and C) has not been assigned a mission and no contact with the enemy has been made.

SECTION III - Summary of Strength and Casualties, February 1945:

	Asst Strength 1 Feb			Asst Strength 28 Feb		
	OFF	NO	EM	OFF	NO	EM
Headquarters	0	1	41	0	1	41
Headquarters and Service	3	2	73	3	2	77
Troop A	4	0	130	4	0	130
Troop B	3	0	128	3	0	133
Troop C	3	0	128	3	0	130
Troop D	4	0	123	3	0	128
Troop E	6	0	97	6	0	109
Company F	6	0	87	3	0	88
Medical Detachment	2	0	12	1	0	12
TOTALS	41	3	827	19	2	848

CASUALTIES (25th -)	OFF	NO	EM
Killed	0	0	0
Wounded	0	0	1
Injured	0	0	2
Missing	0	0	0
Captured	0	0	0
TOTALS	0	0	3

Enemy Prisoners of War captured by our Forces: 4.

SECTION IV - COMMANDING OFFICERS - February 1945:

Squadron Commander: 1 February 1945 to 28 February 1945 - Lt. Col. GEORGE C. NEWJAYEN, 025422, Cavalry.

HEADQUARTERS AND SERVICE TROOP: 1 February 1945 to 28 February 1945 - Captain PAUL G. PETERSON, 0101011, Cavalry.

TROOP A: 1 February 1945 to 28 February 1945 - Captain HERBIE R. SCOTT, 030838, Cavalry.

TROOP B: 1 February 1945 to 28 February 1945 - Captain LOREN L. VIVOND, 01012532, Cavalry.

TROOP C: 1 February 1945 to 28 February 1945 - Captain GEORGE W. BARBER, 01012910, Cavalry.

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Sec III, RAAPZ, 3 Mar 45, contd.

TROOP D: 1 February 1945 to 0830 17 February 1945 - 1st Lt. EDWARD J. MC GANN, 01012349, Cavalry.

0830 17 February 1945 to 28 February 1945 - 1st Lt. THOMAS H. JONES, 01012349, Cavalry.

TROOP E: 1 February 1945 to 28 February 1945 - 1st Lt. PETER M. SOUTHER, 01012349, Cavalry.

COMPANY F: 1 February 1945 to 28 February 1945 - Captain JOHN T. SCHMIDT, 01010308, Cavalry.

MEDICAL DETACHMENT: 1 February 1945 to 28 February 1945 - Captain MYLER FRIEDMANTHAL, 0425004, Medical Corps.

**GEORGE C. BENJAMIN,
1st. Col., Cavalry,
Commanding.**

2 Incls.

Incl 1 - Unit Journal.

**Incl 2 - File of Incoming and
Outgoing Messages.**

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 AUTH: Ltr 5th AB, 19 Mar 75
 DATE: 9 April 1945
 INIT: *JEH*

HEADQUARTERS
 85TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON MECHANIZED *dup*
 APO 255

9 April 1945

REPORT AFTER ACTION AGAINST THE ENEMY
 (Reference: Par 19, AR 345-105, 0-3)

MARCH 1945

DOWNGRADED TO:
 CLASSIFICATION REMOVED
 BY AUTHORITY OF TAG *LTC*

a. Campaign of GERMANY

b. Losses in Action

1. Personnel [REDACTED]

	Off	WO	Date	Initials
Killed	0	0	EM	
Wounded	0	0	6	
Injured	0	0	0	
Missing	0	0	0	
Captured	0	0	0	
TOTALS	0	0	6	

2. Vehicular

- (a) Car, armored, M8, No. W-6032632, was hit by enemy artillery and completely burned.
- (b) Car, armored, M8, No. W-6034108, was hit by AT gun and abandoned.
- (c) Carriage, motor, 75mm Howitzer, M-8, No. W-4052655, hit mine and was abandoned.
- (d) Truck, 1/4 ton, 4 x 4, No. W-20150956, hit mine and was abandoned in the face of an AT gun.

c. Commanders:

SQUADRON COMMANDER: 1 March 1945 to 31 March 1945 - Lt. Col. GEORGE C. BENJAMIN, 023422, Cavalry.

HEADQUARTERS AND SERVICE TROOP: 1 March 1945 to 31 March 1945 - Captain PAUL O. PATERSON, 01010111, Cavalry.

TROOP A: 1 March 1945 to 31 March 1945 - Captain SEYMOUR B. SCOTT, 0306938, Cavalry.

TROOP B: 1 March 1945 to 31 March 1945 - Captain LOREN L. VIND, 01012532, Cavalry.

TROOP C: 1 March 1945 to 31 March 1945 - Captain GEORGE W. BASQUEZ, 01012910, Cavalry.

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TROOP D: 1 March 1945 to 1200 13 March 1945 - 1st Lt. THOMAS R. JONES, 01012338, Cavalry.

1200 13 March 1945 to 31 March 1945 - 1st Lt. EDWARD J. MC GANN, 01012549, Cavalry.

TROOP E: 1 March 1945 to 31 March 1945 - 1st Lt. PETER M. SCOTT R, 01012349, Cavalry.

COMPANY F: 1 March 1945 to 31 March 1945 - Captain JOHN T. SCHWABZ, 01010396, Cavalry.

MEDICAL DETACHMENT: 1 March 1945 to 31 March 1945 - Captain MEYER FRIEDMAN HAL, 0425804, Medical Corps.

d Attachments - None.

Assignments - None for the Squadron as a whole. Troops A, B and C, however, assigned together with one platoon of assault guns each (E Troop) to COA, COB and OOR respectively, until 10 March and after 30 March 1945.

g. See map and overlays.

5-4 {

f. Ammunition Expenditures.
(1) Squadron less detachments expended no ammunition.
(2) Records are not available for expenditures of detached elements of Squadron.

g. The Squadron (- A, B and C) saw no action as a unit during the period. Prior to 10 March and the completion of operation "Grenade" 85th (-) was in division reserve with no mission assigned, other than general control of occupied areas. For activities of troops with the Combat Commands during the period to 10 March see attached report.

From 10 March 1945 to 30 March 1945 85th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron was given the mission of occupying an area vicinity VIERSEN (see overlay)

The principal towns (less VIERSEN and DUKEN) were garrisoned and a house to house search was made throughout the area for enemy soldiers, agents, weapons and other war materiel. Traffic blocks were set up to control civilian and military traffic and the area was patrolled twenty-four hours a day.

31 March 1945 saw the Squadron minus A, B and C enroute to cross the Rhine.

- (1) Not applicable
- (2) " "
- (3) " "

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- (4) Not applicable
 - (5) " "
 - (6) " "
 - (7) " "
 - (8) " "
 - (9) " "
 - (10) " "
 - (11) For a description of the problems of "occupation" see Section Y.

h. Comments

SECTION I

- (1) (a) Morale: The morale was generally excellent for the following reasons:
1. Mail service is becoming more regular after the Christmas package rush.
 2. All troops were billeted in good buildings when tactically possible.
 3. War news on all fronts affected the morale to the good more than any other factor.
 4. Satisfaction of having so successfully accomplished the Roor River and Cologne Plain operation was equally important in the upswing of morale with par 3.

(b) Discipline: There were three (3) cases of non-fraternization tried before a special court-martial and one (1) case for which a general court-martial was recommended and has not yet been brought to trial. The special court-martial found all three defendants guilty of fraternization with a German civilian.

(2) Reinforcements: Have received seven officers and thirty-three enlisted men. In general the quality of all has been very satisfactory. One troop commander in particular stated that although his reinforcements had not been introduced to combat, all men classed as 733 (armored car crew member) had a well rounded training so that they could be easily adapted to all positions in the reconnaissance platoon. The rate of return of former members of this unit from hospitals has been satisfactory.

(3) Awards and Decorations: One award ceremony was held during which two silver stars and three bronze stars were presented by the Commanding General 5th Armored Division.

SECTION II - Not applicable.

SECTION III - No comment.

SECTION IV - Supply and Maintenance Matters.

No comment. No outstanding or unusual occurrences were reported relative to performance of old or new equipment under

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battle conditions, and no unusual supply situations occurred.

SECTION V - Civilians.

Management and control of civilian population between the Rier and the Rhine proved to be less troublesome than was anticipated. Generally the civilians were passive in their reaction to our occupation and after a few days became almost cooperative. Party leaders above the rank of blockleiter had departed for parts unknown and in most cases taken party records with them but reliable informants were found in most towns so that questionable persons were quickly placed under surveillance.

During the first few days, a stringent curfew was enforced but this proved to be needless and a curfew from 1800 to 2700 with circulation confined to the Landkreise was put in effect with good results.

Government of small towns was left in the hands of the incumbent burgemeisters with assistance in many cases from the parish priests who were most cooperative. Reliable civilians designated as village policeman proved to be energetic in their enforcement of our regulations.

Displaced personnel proved to be quite a problem. Seeing freedom for the first time in years and undisciplined with a thorough hatred of Germans and Germany, displaced personnel were inclined to become freebooters with the Germans their prey. It was found that by providing these people with shelter, food and adequate guards plus persuasion now and then from the muzzle end of standard U. S. small arms convinced them that the correct mode of behavior was an orderly one and that this Army would not countenance any looting, pillaging or general disorder even though the victims be our enemies.

Activities in combing the areas for weapons, demolitions, pigeons, radio transmitters and concealed German soldiers was carried on without any resistance on the part of civilians and it is felt that with a few exceptions, civilians cooperated to the fullest extent in complying with these orders.

The following cases are illustrative of the type of problems which confronted our unit in the maintenance of security and civilian order in Germany:

1. During the first week of occupation stores of enemy ammunition including small arms, grenades, artillery and various types of demolitions were found in the area and were picked up by supply section in order to forestall the use of any of these means by civilians for sabotage purposes.

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2. On 17 March 1945, a civilian informant showed our CIC agents the location of an underground telephone cable which ran through KREFFELD across the Rhine. This was cut and information of its location given to Signal personnel.

3. On 23 March 1945, 20 four pronged metal "tire stabs" were found in a vacant house. Investigation revealed that they had been left behind by German soldiers, that the civilian owners were innocent of their existence. The "tire stabs" were confiscated and turned over to G-2.

4. During the night of 24-25 March 1945, one of our patrols hit a trip wire which had been strung across the road in the village of VENN. The trip ignited a flare or incendiary which shot across the road but did no damage. A thorough investigation made by CIC led to the conclusion that the installation was probably built by U.S. Army personnel as a practical joke. It is significant to note that in the course of investigation the civilians cooperated 100 percent, because of fear of reprisal by the U. S. Army. The respect that the German people have for the military, a respect built up by the Germany Army, should not be disregarded. It is felt that this reaction to the force of the armed service is a valuable weapon in the hands of the U. S. Army.

5. During the period, over 20 U. S. Army enlisted men were apprehended and turned over to their respective commanding officers for fraternizing with civilians. These men were mostly from service units which apparently had not convinced their men of the importance of maintaining security in Germany. It is felt that because they have not actually fought the Germans, that it is difficult for men of service units to develop the proper mental attitude. For this reason it is believed that more time and effort should be spent in indoctrinating men of service units on these two subjects.

The following conclusions have been arrived at as a result of our operations as occupying troops during the period.

1. A firm, courteous military enforcement of regulations is the best method to use in controlling civilian population.
2. Preplanning for the care of displaced personnel, adequate guards and an immediate but brief indoctrination course for all displaced personnel should be instituted as soon as practicable.
3. Constant and active investigation by CIC agents of all possible saboteurs must be made in all areas occupied by our forces.
4. Security training of all Army units, including service units should be continuous.

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SECTION VI

Commentary Concerning Activities of Detached Elements

1. Troop A - Attached to Combat Command A.
 - a. 26 Feb 45, attached to CGA. Proceeded during darkness of 26-27 Feb to join Command north of Hetterf crossing Roor River at Linnich, Germany.
 - b. 27 Feb 45, - Provided right flank security for Command and liaison with CCR. Rejoined CGA at Erkelens.
 - c. 28 Feb 45 - Continued flank security and liaison with CCR. Moved to vicinity of Hardy.
 - d. 1 Mar 45 - Performed liaison mission with CCR, 102nd and 84th Inf. Div. One platoon guard for Command trains. Moved to east of Vierson.
 - e. 2 Mar 45 - Third Platoon acted as advance guard for 34th Tank Bn. First and second platoons initially right and left guards then liaison with 102nd and 84th Inf. Div. Moved to Hoxhofs and Krefeld.
 - f. 3 Mar 45 - Reconnoitered assembly area and routes for Command and performed perimeter defense for the night, in the vicinity of Vlunn. CP located one Km south of Tennisberg.
 - h. 5 Mar 45 - At 0130 assigned mission of proceeding to Brinkhof to protect left flank of CCR. At 1000 reverted to mission of clearing enemy from area Vlunn, Schaephusen, and Rhein. Troop outposted line approximately 1 Km south of Lintfert for the night.
 - i. 6 Mar 45 - Continued assigned mission, patrolling roads, administering Military Government and evacuating displaced personnel. CP moved to Rayen.
 - j. 7-9 Mar 45 - Same.
 - k. 10 Mar 45 - Relieved of assigned mission at 1200. Moved to Vennheide and reverted to Squadron control upon closing area at approximately 1600. Second Platoon Troop E attached to this troop for entire mission.

2. Troop B - Attached to Combat Command B.
 - a. Route of advance of CCB - generally Hetterf, Katzen, Erkelens, Hahnshalen and Reyd.
 - b. Crossed Roor River at approximately 2300A. Bivouaced in Hetterf that night. Early next morning given mission of protecting right flank of CCB - who moved out shortly after this troop.
 - c. Troop B provided constant reconnaissance on right flank of CCB. Mission was to screen advance of Command and provide timely warning of enemy resistance from the East that might hold up an armored advance, i.e., Anti-tank Guns, and enemy armor mainly. This mission was extremely difficult the first two days due to heavily mined areas and well placed Anti-tank guns, however it was accomplished to the compliments of the Commanding Officer of CCB. Screening and protection on the flank allowed the Command to concentrate on the frontal area only and after the initial breakthrough the objectives of CCB were taken in fast order. Two vehicles were lost to mines and one to anti-tank fire but casualties

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Were light and not serious.

d. Third Platoon Troop E attached to this troop for entire mission.

3. Troop C - Attached to Combat Command R.

a. At 0330 on 27 February 1945, the troop with the first platoon of E Troop attached, was given the mission of marking the route from Pöhlenberg, Germany through Lianich across the Roor to Hetterf, Germany for the advance of Combat Command R. South of Hetterf, the troop received orders to reconnoiter an assembly area for the Command. This accomplished, the troop was ordered by radio to establish a security screen along the East boundary of XIII Corps, with orders not to cross the Corps boundary except on order and not to extend the screen farther North than the 70 grid line until ordered, maintaining physical contact with the leading element of the left flank of the XIX Corps. This screen was established at 270600 February 1945 maintained until 271600 February 1945 when the troop was ordered to extend the screen from the 70 grid line along the XIII Corps boundary to the town of Wey (FO51737), remaining in this position until 282300 February 1945; thence marking the route through Erkelens, Gladback-Rheindahlen to an assembly area 2000 yards South of Hardt. At this position the troop was given the mission of reconnoitering bridge sites on the Niers Canal to provide a route of advance for the Combat Command. From the Canal the troop continued reconnoitering and marking the route through Viersen, Suchtelm, Oedt, Kempen, Hals. At Tonsburg the Command became heavily engaged and had to fight its way through Vulsheide to 1000 yards East of Neukircherfeld and became bogged down, because the XIX Corps would not allow the Command to utilize the roads through Neers. Darkness having closed in the Commander decided to wait until the moon came up before continuing his attack. At this time, 032300 March 1945, the troop received orders to reconnoiter for a cross country route to Repelen. On this mission one platoon encountered stiff enemy resistance about one and one half miles North of Neukircherfeld, losing one officer and four enlisted men. The information obtained by the patrol influenced the decision of the Combat Command Commander to postpone the attack until daybreak.

b. The Combat Command fought its way through Repelen into Orsey on the Rhine. The route from Rheinkamp to Orsey being under enfilade fire, the troop was given the mission of reconnoitering an alternate route through the woods East of Repelen. The mission was accomplished encountering only small arms fire. That same night, 05 March 1945, the troop was ordered into Orsey to setup a screen North of Orsey to secure the Tank Destroyers at that point. One Platoon was used to establish OP's in the various large buildings and churches in Orsey to direct artillery fire on targets on the East side of the Rhine. Two days later the 295th Infantry relieved the Combat Command and the troop marked the route to St. Tons for an assembly point.

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George G. Benjamin
GEORGE G. BENJAMIN,
Lt Col, Cavalry
Commanding.

- 2 Incls.**
- Incl 1 - Unit Journal.**
- Incl 2 - File of Incoming and
Outgoing messages.**

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**HEADQUARTERS
 6888th CENTRAL Postal Directory Squadron
 APO SF 963, U S Army**

3 May 1946

**REPORT AFTER ACTION ANALYSIS THE BENT
 (MATERIALS: PFC, PFC, PFC, PFC)**

APRIL 1946

- 1. Dispatch of message
- 2. Losses in action

1. Personnel

KILLED	07	00	00
Wounded	00	00	00
Missing	00	00	00
Returned	00	00	00
Operational	00	00	00
TOTALS	07	00	00

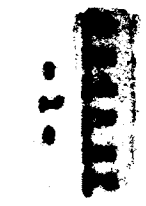
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 BY AUTHORITY OF TAG... LIG

1 Feb 46 Date HSP Initials

- 2. Vehicles
 - (a) One, Amovad, M-8, No. H-000000, was abandoned due to enemy action.
 - (b) One, Amovad, M-8, No. H-000000, was captured by the enemy.
 - (c) Truck, 1/8 ton, 4 x 4, No. H-000000, was hit by enemy fire and abandoned.
 - (d) Truck, 1/8 ton, 4 x 4, No. H-000000, was damaged beyond repairs as result of enemy gunfire.
 - (e) Truck, 1/4 ton, 4 x 4, No. H-000000, was damaged beyond repairs and abandoned due to enemy action.
 - (f) Truck, 1/4 ton, 4 x 4, No. H-000000, was abandoned due to enemy action.
 - (g) Truck, 1/8 ton, 4 x 4, No. H-000000, was abandoned due to enemy action.
 - (h) Truck, 1/8 ton, 4 x 4, No. H-000000, was captured by the enemy.
 - (i) Two (2) Tractor's, equip, 1 ton, Nos. H-000000 and H-000000, were wrecked and abandoned in night operation against the enemy.

3. Commanders
 SQUADRON COMMANDER: 1 April 1946 to 30 April 1946 - Lt. Col. GEORGE G. NEUBAHN, OSSAS, Cavalry.
 HEADQUARTERS & SERVICE SQUAD: 1 April 1946 to 30 April 1946 - Captain PAUL O. PERDUE, Oldham, Cavalry.

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- TROOP A:** 1 April 1945 to 30 April 1945 - Captain **WALTER R. SCOTT**, ORO0098, Cavalry.
- TROOP B:** 1 April 1945 to 30 April 1945 - Captain **LORIN L. VIGORS**, ORO1252, Cavalry.
- TROOP C:** 1 April 1945 to 30 April 1945 - Captain **GERGE W. BARQUEL**, ORO12510, Cavalry.
- TROOP D:** 1 April 1945 to 30 April 1945 - 1st Lt. **EDWARD J. MC GINN**, ORO12540, Cavalry.
- TROOP E:** 1 April 1945 to 30 April 1945 - 1st Lt. **PETER M. BOUTER**, ORO12549, Cavalry.
- COMPANY F:** 1 April 1945 to 30 April 1945 - Captain **JOHN T. SCHWARTZ**, ORO12596, Cavalry.
- MEDICAL DETACHMENT:** 1 April 1945 to 30 April 1945 - Captain **MEYER BRIDENTHAL**, Medical Corps.

g. Attachments - Troop C attached to Combat Command "H" 1 April 1945 to 25 April 1945. Troops A and B attached to Combat Commands "A" & "B" respectively 1 April 1945 to 27 April 1945.

Assignments - None.

g. See map and overlays.

f. Ammunition expenditures:

Carbine, cal. .30, ball	22,500 rounds
Rifle, cal. .30	9,000 rounds
Machine Gun, cal. .30	64,500 rounds
Sub-machine Gun, cal. .45	16,500 rounds
Machine Gun, cal. .50	4,500 rounds
Grenade, hand, all types	200
Grenade, rifle, all types	200
57 MM Gun, M1	200
57 MM Gun, M7	100
57 MM Gun, commister	20
60 MM Mortar, M1	200
60 MM Mortar, Illum.	0
75 MM Howitzer, M1	200
75 MM Howitzer, M7	20
75 MM Howitzer, Recoil	10
75 MM Howitzer, Commister	0
Pete, smoke	15
Rocket, 2.36", M1	0
Mine, M7	1

- k. (1) Not applicable.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) Not applicable.
- (5) Not applicable.
- (6) Not applicable.
- (7) Excellent.
- (8) See Section V.

- (9) Not applicable.
- (10) Not applicable.
- (11)

The mission assigned the Squadron during the period was not very stimulating and there is little of value to report. Activities consisted of providing escort for fuel trains, occupying and governing areas in conjunction with Division Trains, blocking traffic, screening the population and searching for enemy soldiers, arms, war material and installations. No problems worth mentioning were encountered aside from the by-now normal headaches of dealing with enemy civilians and vast numbers of slave laborers in a country thoroughly disorganized by the progress of the war. The attack of the enemy division Von Glasewitz through the Corps zone from the north created some confusion and for a time the lines of supply and communication were disrupted. While no contact was made by this Squadron with the Von Glasewitz, a good many Prisoners of War were taken from this outfit and much information gained which helped higher headquarters complete their picture of the ways and whereabouts on Von Glasewitz.

Comments

Section I - Personnel Matters

(1) (a) **Morale:** The general morale rating has been excellent. The most determining factor has been the successful participation by all personnel in what is believed to be the final victorious stages of the campaign. Long continuous movements deeper into Germany have been extremely satisfying and have brought a feeling of final accomplishment of a long, difficult, and dangerous task. From about 25 April 1945 to 30 April 1945 all personnel have been billeted in generally satisfying situations. The mail has been arriving in regular deliveries.

(b) **Discipline:** No courts-martial for the entire month tried within the Squadron.

(c) **Reinforcements:** Fifty-five enlisted men received. The need, in numbers, has not been satisfied for either officers or enlisted men. The quality of reinforcements has been satisfactory.

(d) **Awards and Decorations:** One officer and one enlisted man were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross on 8 April 1945 at a ceremony. Colonel John T. Cole made the presentation. Troop A, this unit, was cited in General Orders, Headquarters 5th Armored Division.

Section II - Intelligence Matters: Not applicable.

Section III - Operations: No comment.

Section IV - Supply and Maintenance Matters.

(1) No outstanding or unusual occurrences were reported relative to performance of old or new equipment under battle conditions.

(2) In crossing the Rhine River and making the long, swift advance over the plains of Northern Germany, the policy of loading all trucks over their rated capacity, especially with gasoline, paid rich dividends in keeping the column rolling. All trucks came through the ordeal with no apparent damage, probably due to the prevalence of good roads.

(3) The automatic change (order from G-4 to Division Quartermaster rather than from unit to Division Quartermaster) to operational rations at outset of the Rhine crossing, and the automatic change from operational rations to "A" rations at the temporary halt at Harford proved highly successful. It allowed the maximum use to be made of kitchen facilities.

Section V - Civilian.

The civilian population, as their white flags indicated, were generally positive. Local burgomasters were genuinely cooperative even those

who had formerly been considered good Nazis. Civilian policemen who were appointed by this headquarters proved to be diligent workers and assisted in the maintenance of general order.

Requests for the turn in of weapons and German soldiers were promptly obeyed by all but a few who had buried weapons. These were discovered on information from displaced personnel and the civilians involved were tried by Military Government Summary Court.

In the town of Harford, Germany, looting and pillaging by civilians in mobs of up to one thousand people was rampant for several days immediately after conquest of the city but this was somewhat curbed when this unit left the area.

German anti-Nazis proved to be excellent informants and gave us sufficient information to arrest those who were dangerous or who had committed war crimes. However most of those high in party affairs had left the area but in at least two cases, minor party officials committed suicide when they learned that we were investigating them.

During the period displaced personnel were less troublesome than in the previous month. The exuberance of liberation having died down considerably and proper food and shelter having been provided, displaced personnel no longer looted and in most cases ceased their migration, apparently now content to sit and wait for evacuation through normal channels.

A total of two hundred eighty-seven prisoners of war were taken, most of them stragglers passing through or hiding out in the area.

SECTION VI - Reports from detached Troops.

1. History of Troop "A" (plus the 2nd Platoon of Troop "E") from 31 March to 27 April 1945.

On 31 March 1945, Troop "A" was assigned to CCA and proceeded to vicinity of Sarup (RA697703) to the command's assembly area. The command was acting in division reserve. The troop acted in liaison and assisted in the movement of the command to the vicinity of Senden. It became necessary on 1 April to select a new route. A Troop (minus the third platoon, which was maintaining liaison with division headquarters and another command) moved quickly over the new route, located enemy resistance pinned them down and gave valuable reports which enable the command to quickly eliminate the strong enemy resistance in Hiltrup and obtain a bridge head over the Dortmund-Ems Canal. Upon commitment of the command, troop A was assigned the mission of protecting the north flank until the command was in position to cross the canal. The troop then had the mission of reconnoitering routes so that the command could rejoin the division, little enemy resistance was met. The troop secured and marked routes and assisted the command in it's move to the new assembly area north of Herford.

The troop remained in vicinity of Wittel (RB 688968) for five days. On the morning of the ninth the troop proceeded to locate route of advance and assisted the command in moving to vicinity of Ingeln, light resistance was encountered.

On the tenth the troop was assigned the mission of advance guard and of securing a route to and a crossing over the Oker River. The troop moved quickly on the mission. Secured two bridges suitable for the command to cross (one of which the enemy withdrew from after attempting to blow it up). The troop then reconnoitered routes and assembly areas for elements of the command in the vicinity of Ketein (RX8623). The troop outposted the perimeter of the command for the night.

At daylight on the 11 April the troop proceeded north from Meine to secure a crossing over the Aller Canal and to make contact with CCR.

This was done against light resistance the mission was then changed because the road net at Gifhorn was not suitable to accommodate both combat commands. The mission was changed to act as advance guard for the command as resistance increased the troop was relieved and assigned the mission of patrolling the extended route of advance and assist the 34th Tank Battalion in keeping it open. This mission plus the mission of assisting the 34th to rejoin the balance of the command continued during the following day. In the vicinity of Bruchau (RY388602) it was necessary for the troop to become heavily engaged with approximately 150 enemy infantry on the east flank of the route.

On the morning of 13 April the troop was assigned the mission of protecting the command's rear (S) and right (E) flank which it attacked north.

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The troop met stiff resistance in vicinity of Staffelde during the day. Staff Sergeant Ling, Acting Platoon leader of third platoon was captured. Direct 20mm and artillery fire were received spasmodically. On the morning of the fourteenth the troop was assigned the mission of patrolling and outposting the Elbe River within the command's boundary. During the night of the fourteenth the third platoon was forced to withdraw from the town of Staffelde (RZ 861532) during a concerted German counterattack one quarter ton was knocked out; one armored car was damaged and had to be abandoned. During the fifteenth the mission continued until approximately 1700B when relieved by the infantry. The first platoon met limited resistance in its advance along the river north of Arneburg (RZ 888614). No Germans were allowed to cross the river in our zone.

During this phase of the operation a platoon of light tanks was attached to the troop. They operated an out post and acted as a mobile reserve. Forward observer attached to the troop at this time picked out and eliminated several targets including an enemy artillery battery.

The troop was relieved at approximately 1700B 15 April and proceeded to new area vicinity of Mannheim (RY 373302). Here the command was to be in Corps reserve. Enemy pockets required that the command be used to eliminate them. The troop reconnoitered and secured routes for the command to move from vicinity of Mannheim to Kneesebeck (RY 008518) in preparation to mopping up a large wooded area. The troop outposted the command's area and contacted friendly units to the north. Upon completion of the command's mission the troop moved to Wendischbreme (RY 160515) and outposted the north section of the command's new area.

On the morning of the 19th the troop was relieved of attachment to CCA and assigned to CCB. No contact could be made and the troop C with the third platoon as advance guard to make physical contact at approximately two miles northeast of Breme (RY 175500). A column of four Mark IV tanks, one large truck and one small truck crossed our path from northwest to southeast. Fire was brought on the enemy without success. Contact not being made with CCB information was transmitted immediately to CCA by radio and by mounted messenger to 85th Cavalry Squadron. The troop then reverted to CCA's control.

The troop was then assigned the mission of reconnoitering area north of the combat command's assembly area and screening the north flank.

During the night one section of the third platoon knocked out a Mark IV tank with an anti-tank mine and captured the crew.

On the morning of the twentieth the troop, plus a light tank platoon, moved out on the mission of reconnoitering an area and selecting a route of advance for the command and securing a line of departure for the command's attack the following day. The line was secured, information was quickly sent back and reinforcements were sent up to help hold the line. During the night the

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enemy attacked with armor and dismounted troops. the second platoon and a married platoon were forced to withdraw from the town of Wiedast. The line of departure was held sufficiently so that the command moved up promptly and jumped off as scheduled.

The troop then acted as liaison with the 29th Infantry Division and CCB and provided flank reconnaissance for the advance. The night of the 21st the troop was employed as perimeter defense in the vicinity of Klense (RY 165869).

The troop continued on its mission of flank protection on the twenty-second. Upon arriving in the vicinity of Tellerdorf the troop reconnoitered and secured routes of advance and assembly areas for the units of CCA.

On the morning of the twenty-third the troop was assigned the mission of establishing and maintaining observation posts on the Elbe river. Fighting was much fiercer in the morning and a large number of prisoners were brought in. The troop took 147 prisoners including seven officers during the day. Three outposts were established on the river.

On the morning of the twenty-fourth the troop was assigned the mission of selecting a route for the command to return after relieve to the vicinity of Meine (RX 905240) and to reconnoiter the command's assembly area and assist the command in moving there. This mission was completed on the twenty-fifth of April.

The troop moved from Retgesbittel (RX 902280) to Brockel (RX 685389) on the 26th and reverted to Squadron control.

During the entire operation second platoon of B Troop was attached to the troop.

All Troop objectives were selected to assist the command in achieving it's mission.

Enemy defenses were spotty and stiff when encountered.

Weather was ideal for fast moving operations.

Enemy skillfully used his weapons and personnel and made excellent use of camouflage.

Our men were in good physical condition and were eager and aggressive under fire and after continued strenuous missions.

Success in all mission is accredited mainly to aggressive attitude of all men of the troop. They had the winning complex.

SECTION VI cont'd.

2. Narrative on History of Troop "B" from 0001 30 March to 0001 27 April 1945. -

Troop B assigned to Combat Command "B" at 0001B 30 March 1945 with Third Platoon of Troop E attached. Joined CCB at Mulhausen (A0405) given mission of leading command from that point to bridge over Rhine River near Wesel to Munster on to contact any troops this side of Munster - Original plan was to have two platoons from Troop B go directly into Munster that night and reconnoiter two routes through Munster for the Task Force of CCB. However, at Appelhausen (A7866) west of Munster we contacted British who had reached that point and was engaged in a heavy battle in that town. We then spent the night in that area and next morning were given mission of finding a crossing of the Dortmund - Ems Canal south of Munster. Met CCR who had built a bridge across canal. We then went North, meeting some opposition and a heavy fight at Hilrath (just south of Munster). One man was wounded in this engagement and about four Germans killed by our small arm fire. Results of B Troop fire unknown but Hilrath was quite heavily defended as it guarded the approaches to the large bridge across canal at Munster. Mission was then changed to come back to CCR crossing and find a route for the command to be in position to block all roads from the east into Munster. First Platoon was given mission of protecting left flank of the command after turning north from the canal crossing. Rest of the troop led CCB. First platoon at Telgte (B 0874) met some resistance but were then met by a German officer with white flag (V-59) who stated that large percent of his troops were wounded and disgusted and would like to give up. But that there were also other troops in town and he didn't know if they would surrender or not. B-1 told him he would have to surrender town or take consequences. The officer then said he would confer with the other CO. Five minutes after he left a fire concentration hit the platoon wounding two men and knocked out one armored car. The one quarter ton vehicles were disabled but recovered at dark, an hour later. Meantime, the command had given orders for rest of troop to go to Telgte and assist B-1 as this city controlled all main roads east of Munster. Third platoon leading knocked out four German vehicles and about 35 prisoners were taken on way to Telgte. First platoon had withdrawn and second platoon then leading received AT fire on entering Telgte from the East. Troop then retired east of the town and stayed the night April 2nd. First and third platoon worked with Task Forces of the command moving east and second platoon and headquarters moved north to protect that flank at a castle on this route, which had been a German CP, about 20 prisoners were taken. A half-track left there to pick up prisoners was swamped with them and later before they could leave they had one colonel, one major, two captains, two lieutenants and about 20 plain soldiers. Three of these were wounded and a small hospital was set up with the German Medical Colonel in charge. two amputations were made and next day half-track crew set out to find someone friendly, two days later this was accomplished.

Meanwhile, the second platoon of E Troop and headquarters continued on route. At Gilderf which seemed to be the only escape

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route from Munster a large amount of German traffic was met. B3 and B2 at this town knocked out two motorcycles, six trucks, two 75mm artillery pieces and generally had a fine day. From there they moved east to the next town. They were met by the burgoemeister who surrendered the town with 1000 prisoners, all members of the hospital. From there we moved south to meet the command. At dark we were parallel but west of them one mile. They were heavily engaged and near the place we were to meet them we also were. Four men were injured and two one quarter ton vehicles were lost. This was from bazooka and small arm fire. Finally met OCB and were given out post job for night at Bedinghausen (B3787).

April 3rd we were given the mission of sending someone into town (B3789) to see if enemy still were there. Night before and that day, all day, as miserable rain prevailed and conditions were not too good. B1 and B3 traveled with the Task Force. B1 going well ahead and taking about fifty prisoners and making job of task force strictly a march. B2 and B3 plus headquarters again worked on the north flank. Decent going for a while but just south of Melle (4101) met dismounted resistance - killed twelve Germans and took six prisoners, two of them SS troops. Traveled east toward Buncle on way captured a train and destroyed engine. Train consisted of four cars of 88mm ammunition and three cars of 105mm ammunition.

Joined the command at Rehnle (W7402) just north of Bad Oeynhausen. Stayed in town and had first night's rest since crossing the Rhine. Next morning given mission of finding bridge across Weser river. B3 commanded by Staff Sergeant Stevens went with Task Force A to pass west of river. TPA held up there for three days. B3 took about fifty prisoners and located several AT guns for the TF.

B2 plus headquarters moved north on main road on west bank of river. South of Munden they were stopped by a road mine, on trying to remove mines, heavy artillery fire from other side of river drove them back. B2 then dismounted and moved to hill in position to observe town of Minden. Then they acted as artillery observers and also patrols killed six Germans. Their observation brought some very effective fire on town of Minden. All bridges were blown and troop assembled at Dahme (W7505) On way to join troop B1 was fired on by AT guns across river and Technician fifth grade Emmet Brown was seriously wounded in action, later dying of wounds.

Troops stayed in Dahme for four days with mission of protecting the command from the north. At this location Lt. JOHN E. LYNCH joined our troop and assumed command of B3.

8 April troop moved to Minden (W8006) to provide security for two bridges across the Weser.

10 April we left Minden and moved in column with OCB at 1200B to Hameln where we crossed the Weser River. Traveled all

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that night crossing Leine River at Sarstedt about 2400B continued to Peine (7016) then to Edemissen (7224) arriving at 0830B next morning. At 1200B we were given mission of contacting the Second Armored south of us. B1 accomplished this. B3 went north to attempt to contact British. Involved in fight and held at Wagenhell (8843). B2, B3 and headquarters traveled through Gifhorn (9135) on to a distance of five miles north and east of the town. At 1900B given mission of joining CCA at Kletze and working with them. Assembled the troop minus first platoon and proceeded to Kletze (3253). Arriving at about 0100B. No troops whatsoever in Kletze, we then followed tracks of armored vehicles to Peritz (Y5458) at 0530A, arrived there and reported to CCA. Given mission at 0630B to protect right flank of the command, while they attacked Tangumunde (8746). On this mission, which was executed in a very satisfactory manner, B3 killed about thirty Germans on ferry at (8934) and captured 200 prisoners. Also flushed eight planes out of landing strip there, of which CCA shot down five. B2 and B3 at Tangerhütte (Y7633) captured about fifteen prisoners and blew up two trains in woods, both loaded with ammunition.

13 April relieved from CCA and ordered to join COB at Osterbury (Y7274). Captured eight prisoners on way and arrived at 1300B. Given mission of outposting Elbe River. B3 at (Y8979) B1 at (Y8877), B2 at (9072). Remained there three days and gave the command excellent observation reporting all movements of enemy in their zone. This gave the command very effective artillery fire but placed the platoons in very dangerous position. On 15 April a heavy artillery barrage fell on B2 and Sergeant Paul M. Vallette was seriously wounded and died on his way to the hospital. He remained at his post continuously until wounded.

16 April the troop traveled with the command on way to reserve area near Chelnitz (Y3762) at 1200B given mission of going south around the command area and reporting about information received of enemy troops in area near Erme. B1 and B3 combed woods northwest of there. Headquarters, B2 and B3 went north on highway to Mellin (Y2825) then to Ahluna (Y2160) then west to Radenbech (Y1154) thence into forest south and west there. On entering forest we received AT fire and lost one quarter ton vehicle and had one man seriously injured, Private first class Robert Shorten. At dark returned to Jubar (Y1559) and set up road blocks for night. Same mission next day.

2300B 17 April given mission of outposting towns at (Headquarters at Deisdorf (1166), B1 at Wechenson (Y1767), B2 at Wallstave (Y2171) and B3 at Abbendorf (Y1466).

18 April same mission with patrols through area. Patrol going south from Deisdorf to Waddelhath (Y8663) contacted British at Waddelhath, who informed them that woods were full of Germans. Returning immediately on same route passed over one hour before, one of the one quarter ton vehicles spotted a group of Germans in woods and open fire immediately and killed crew on second and third machine gun then opened fire and Lt. Lynch and Pfc Abrey Smith were hit. The other vehicle maintained a steady fire and recovered bodies of Lt. Lynch and Pfc Smith. Patrol then returned to C at Deisdorf

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and the two bodies were sent to the command's rear.

That same night heavy tank and tracked and motor vehicles were heard to the north in woods. Everyone was very sure they were British and information could not be gotten that they were otherwise. At 0430B the next morning the column approached the town of Deisdorf and when the outpost could identify them they were in a position to lose their efficiency. As no information was gained from that outpost the column came up to the rear of another outpost and when identified in the dark they in turn moved away from their vehicles. In the confusion a German non-commissioned officer came to our CP and gave us a surrender ultimatum, either surrender or fight your way out. We decided to start moving right away and moved out on the only road left to us and with German vehicles commanding that road. However, the confusion seemed to be to everyone's benefit and we escaped across country to Kemke (Y1763). We observed the column pass through Deisdorf to Lindhof (Y1163) in a large wooded area there. The air corps and artillery went to work for about four hours and two days later approximately 100 vehicles were found knocked out or abandoned in that woods also Staff of Division Clauswitz was picked up at that time.

20 April moved up through Deisdorf to Dahre (Y1368) and outposted that area.

21 April contacted 29th Infantry Division and maintained contact with them and CP. Had same mission next day and then moved to Manum (Y1158), Jubar (Y1459) and Ludhof (Y1163) and outposted for the command. We were relieved from CPB and joined the Squadron on 26 April 1945.

Ammunition expenditure - No accurate record, but much heavier than normal due to flank job and a more than normal amount of fighting.

Physical condition of men very low at times when for instance we drove steady for 43 of 48 hours, also at times when outposts were moved into enemy areas in darkness.

Vehicular and radio maintenance bad, when moving so much and platoons almost constantly removed from troop headquarters. Men recuperate much faster than materials.

Value of underground very small because of time element. We went through at least twenty-five towns that there were reported links, etc, although they had been there at a late date, most workers couldn't give us recent information, which is of the most important to us.

When we had decent or normal reconnaissance missions, although they were rougher and sometimes disastrous the men were much more contented and much more successful, the loss of men and material on this mission was very heavy in proportion to the rest of the division, but nevertheless the men were doing the job they were trained for and could see the value of their work and of information and the part they were playing. I don't believe a combat command should be led by a reconnaissance platoon unless they can be given sufficient time to do reconnaissance, which they are trained for

SECTION VI, cont'd.

3. History of Troop "C" from 30 March to 25 April 1945.

At 110030 March 1945, "C" Troop was attached to Combat Command "R", 5th Armored Division to remain attached to this command until 0600B 25 April 1945. The attachment took place while the Troop was at Viersen, Germany and the troop moved to the Combat Commands assembly area in the vicinity of St. Genis (RA 1303) Nor D'Guerre, a move of approximately 12 miles.

At the assembly area the troop received orders to mark the route for the command, to an assembly area east of the Rhine River in the vicinity northeast of Dulmen. At Dulden, because of heavy fighting, the troop was ordered to reconnoiter a bypass south through Senden, (RA 8362), Nor D'Guerre. In attempting to reconnoiter this route, the troop encountered stiff resistance in the form of small arms, 20 millimeter and bazookas. This action taking place approximately 1 mile north of Senden. The troop and attachments suffered 10 casualties of varying severity. Although these casualties were inflicted, the troop was successful in its mission because the troop did clear out this pocket of resistance and proceeded into Senden, radioing back that the bridges had been blown on the canal Bele, south of the town. The distance traveled at this point was 88 miles.

With the mission unchanged, that is reconnoitering the axes of advance of the command, the troop moved out of Senden at 0830B 1 April 1945 reconnoitering a bivouac area 2 miles south of Greffen (RB 2874) Nor D'Guerre. The weather throughout this operation was extremely disagreeable being rainy and cold, slowing the operations because of the poor visibility. To expedite the reconnaissance of the route, one reconnaissance platoon would take the lead on the route, immediately behind them would be a married platoon acting as point. Upon contact with the enemy the point would immediately move up and take over the fighting. The reconnaissance platoon would change into the following formation. Two scout section peeps and one armored car for long distance communication. This became known as the tankers "Cat Eyes".

The next day the troop bivouaced 2 miles west of Herford, covering a distance of 35 miles. Resistance being extremely light and of the delaying type, the troop continued route reconnaissance advancing 27 miles on the 3rd of April. The resistance began to stiffen at this point, the Combat Command destroyed eleven 88 millimeter guns, one light tank and many trucks in the vicinity of Vlothe (RB 7692). Bad Oyenhausen surrendered to the 3rd platoon of the troop taking four 88 millimeter guns intact and 200 prisoners of war. From Vlothe, the troop moved through to Langenholzhauzen (BB494). East of this point, the third platoon helped negotiate the surrender of Rinteln. From Langenholzhauzen the troop moved back through Asendorf (BB790) to cross the Weser at Hamlen. Slight resistance was encountered at Springe but the troop proceeded as far as Orie (C 4007), where they encountered heavy resistance consisting of bazookas, rifle and machine gun fire. By night fall we had advanced to Vehrum (X 6718), having covered approximately 30 miles for this period. Hehenhameln surrendered to the third platoon, taking 21 prisoners of war, 30 rifles and 1 anti-tank gun knocked out. The troop covered 20 miles the next day, meeting very light resistance and taking only 15 prisoners, stopping for the night at Meinersen

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(X7834). On the 11th of April the town of Roheberg (Y2361) was cleared resulting in the capture of 400 prisoners, two of which were generals from the XII Army Group, and the freeing of 1000 Russians and Poles and the adding of 38 more miles traveled. Werben on the Elbe was reached on the 12th of April, after a dash of 45 miles and the knocking out of 6 trucks, 1 half-track, 2 sedans and 1 motorcycle. The town of Beetsendorf surrendered to the third platoon without a struggle. One mobile ordnance company captured intact, contents: 9 trucks and 60 prisoners and one M. 109 destroyed by Private Hudspeth.

The troop was then given the mission of reconnoitering bridge sites on the Elbe River from northwest of Werben to East of Rabel, finally setting up OP's along this line. Two railroad trains were observed on the east side of the Elbe and through the rapid cooperation of the air force, successfully destroyed. The troop moved from the area of Werben to Vietzen, attached directly to the 47th Armored Infantry Battalion and received the mission of mopping up the area south to Gardelegen to Klotze. Because the Task Force commander did not wish to keep his whole column moving, in order to save gasoline he attached one medium tank plus two squads of infantry to each platoon. This combination was ideal because it had direct fire power support and the infantry to expedite the clearing of towns where it was necessary to clear each building. The time allotted for this mission was two days but due to the successfulness of the above combination, the mission was completed the same day at 1500B 17 April 1945.

On the 18th of April the troop was given the mission of marking the route to Salzwedel for the command and then setting up a screen to the north. The march of the troop was good even though the personnel were extremely fatigued. This position of screening was maintained for two days and 60 prisoners were taken from area around Seeben. On the 20th of April, Combat Command "B" started their offensive north to Dannenberg. The troop was used once more for reconnoitering the axis of advance. Because of the heavy resistance encountered only task force type reconnaissance was possible. By this I mean that the command task forces moved directly with the reconnaissance elements and fighting was encountered from Luchow until they took their objective 1 the following afternoon.

After remaining in Dannenberg for three days, we reverted to Squadron control, in place, and moved to the Squadron assembly area the following morning, 25 April 1945.

- 2 Incls.
Incl - 1 - Unit Journal
Incl - 2 - Incoming and Outgoing
Msgs file.

George C. Benjamin
GEORGE C. BENJAMIN,
Lt. Col., Cavalry,
Commanding.