

After Action Reports and 1943 Unit History 87th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mechanized)

<http://www.7tharmdiv.org/docrep/N-87-AAR.pdf>

Transcribed from the original documents in Box 15628 (7th Armored Division 607-CAV-0.1 to 607-CAV-0.3) of Record Group 407 (Adjutant General's Office) at National Archives II in College Park, MD. Note that NARA changed their box numbering, so that this 2005 box number is no longer the correct box number, but the Record Group and content numbering systems have not changed.

This document was initially transcribed from copies obtained from the National Archives by Mr. Robert F. Porecca, son of the late T/4 Sgt. Frank D. Porecca of the Squadron. The initial transcription was done by Roy W. Boylan, nephew of the late Colonel Vincent L. Boylan (1913-1983). Vincent L. Boylan was the Commanding Officer of the 87th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized of the 7th Armored Division from March 1943 through July 1945.

Using a new copy of the original document provided by Mike Furlich (Squadron Communications Chief), Mike and Roy Boylan made corrections to the initial transcription.

The present version was edited, to assure conformity with the original pages, by Wesley Johnston, son of Walter G. Johnston, Jr., veteran of Company B, 38th Armored Infantry Battalion. The initial report is the 1943 Unit History report. Note that the 1943 Unit History has not yet been edited to assure correspondence with the original document. The 1943 Unit History is followed by the After Action Reports, one for each month once combat was entered. These reports are dated either at the end of the report month or in the first days of the month following the report month.

The original spellings and format are retained in the transcript. The correct (or a few alternate) spelling of town names is given as a footnote on the first occurrence of those mis-spelled town names that have so far been identified. Word wrap in which a line of text continues to the next line is not necessarily as in the original. If there is any question of accuracy, please contact Wesley Johnston (wwjohnston@aol.com) so that the original scanned images can be checked to assure that the transcript does or does not match the original.

Bob Porecca and Roy Boylan look forward to hearing from any veterans of the unit or their relatives or anyone interested in this material.

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UNIT HISTORY
of

A. 87th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized

B. Changes in Organization.

The 87th Armored Reconnaissance Battalion was redesignated the 87th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized on 20 September 1943, per paragraph 2, General Order Number 36, Headquarters Seventh Armored Division, dated 20 September 1943. Pursuant to the above General Order, the following changes were made: The Reconnaissance Company of the 31st Armored Regiment was assigned to the Squadron and designated Troop "D". The Reconnaissance Company of the 40th Armored Regiment was assigned to the Squadron and designated Troop "E", (Assault Gun) Troop of the Squadron. The Light Tank Company of the Battalion was redesignated as Company "F" in the Squadron.

C. Strength.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>ENLISTED MEN</u>
1 January 1943	62	997
31 January 1943	64	977
28 February 1943	62	953
31 March 1943	67	938
30 April 1943	68	931
31 May 1943	69	913
30 June 1943	69	898
31 July 1943	65	888
31 August 1943	63	878
30 September 1943	74	1170
31 October 1943	66	1033
30 November 1943	62	1013
31 December 1943	62	975

D. Stations (Permanent or Temporary), of Unit or parts thereof.

The 87th Armored Reconnaissance Battalion departed from North Camp Polk, Louisiana on 12 March 1943, and arrived at Camp Coxcomb (Desert Training Center), California, 15 March 1943. The Battalion departed from Camp Coxcomb California, 6 August 1943, and arrived at Fort Benning, Georgia, 11 August 1943. On 5 September, 1943 Companies "A" and "C" departed Fort Benning, Georgia, for Barnwell and Aiken, South Carolina, respectively, to organize and operate temporary Prisoner of War Camps for German Prisoners engaged in the harvesting of peanuts. These units returned to Fort Benning, Georgia, 8 October 1943. Major Charles A. Cannon, Jr., 0-23835, Squadron Executive Officer, was in command of these detachments.

E. Marches.

- a. Change of Station.
 - b. Length, 1747 miles.
 - c. Departed Camp Polk, Louisiana, 12 March 1943, and arrived Camp Coxcomb, California, 15 March 1943.
 - d. Travel was by rail with weather good.
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- a. Change of Station
 - b. Length 2317 miles
 - c. Departed Camp Coxcomb, California, 6 August 1943, and arrived Fort Benning, Georgia, 11 August 1943.
 - d. Travel was by rail with weather good.

F. Campaigns.

None.

G. Battles.

None.

H. Commanding Officer in Important Engagements.

None.

I. Losses in Action, Officers and Enlisted Men.

None.

J. Former and Present Members who have Distinguished Themselves in Action.

None.

K. Photographs of Personnel, Important Scenes of Events.

None.

L. Summary.

1. From 1 January 1943 to 12 March 1943, the 87th Armored Reconnaissance Battalion was stationed at North Camp Polk, Louisiana. On 12 March 1943, the 87th Armored Reconnaissance Battalion as part of the Seventh Armored Division, moved to Camp Coxcomb, California, the Desert Training Center for Desert Training. On 16 March, 1943, orders were received transferring the Battalion Commander, Lieutenant Colonel John H. Claybrook, 0-15817, to Armored Force Headquarters, Fort Knox, Kentucky. Lieutenant Colonel (then Major) Vincent L. Boylan, 0-22163, assumed command of the Battalion. The period 12 March to 16 July 1943, was devoted to training in cross-country driving, night driving, small unit training and combat firing problems. As prescribed by Army Ground Force Headquarters, the last eleven days of this period were spent in an eleven day problem (maneuver). The period 17 July to 5 August, was spent in maintenance and preparation for movement to Fort Benning, Georgia. The period 15 August to 15 September 1943, was devoted to small unit training and preparation for, and range firing. On 15 November 1943, the Squadron as part of the Division, moved to the field for one month. Range firing was continued during this period and preparation was made for various tests of parts of the Squadron and for the Squadron test which was conducted by Third Corps on the fourth and fifth of December.
2. On 2 August 1943, while stationed in the Desert, an orchestra was formed by members of the Battalion. The orchestra has improved steadily and has been enhanced by the addition of new instruments and additional members and is now one of which the entire Squadron is proud.
3. On 15 October 1943 a squadron newspaper was organized and published under the title, "RECON REPORTER". This paper is published on the 15th of every month. The title of the paper was chosen as the result of an interesting contest.

For the Squadron Commander:

FRED M. LAMBDIN
2nd Lt, 87th Cav Rcn Sq Mecz
Adjutant

7TH ARMORED DIVISION
APO #257, c/o Postmaster
U S ARMY

AFTER ACTION REPORT
Month of August 1944

87TH CAV RCN SQ MECZ

Lt. Col. Vincent L. Boylan,
Commanding.

R-E-S-T-R-I-C-T-E-D

HEADQUARTERS
87th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized
APO 257, U. S. Army

3 September, 1944.

SUBJECT: Battle Report.

TO : COMMANDING GENERAL, 7TH Armored Division, APO 257,
U. S. Army. (Att: Division Historian)

In compliance with order contained in Radio Message, 1420 1 September 1944, Headquarters 7th Armored Division, the enclosed Battle Report is submitted.

For the Squadron Commander:

(signed)
TRENT NEWTON
1st Lt, Cavalry
Adjutant

3-incls.

#1 - Battle Report.

#2 - Supporting papers, S-3.

#3 - Supporting papers, S-2.

R-E-S-T-R-I-C-T-E-D

S-E-C-R-E-T

HEADQUARTERS
87th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized
APO 257, U. S. Army

3 September, 1944.

UNIT HISTORY AND BATTLE REPORT

The first elements of the 87th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized landed on Utah Beach, near Isigny on 10 August 1944, followed by the rest of the Squadron over a period of about two full days. Squadron Headquarters landed on the 11th, and after a brief halt for reorganization pushed immediately to the initial concentration area just South East of La Haye du Puits. Here Troop "D" was attached to Combat Command "A", Troop "B" to Combat Command "B" and Troop "C" to Combat Command "R", each being assigned a corresponding location in the area. Troop "D" moved out with Combat Command "A" almost immediately.

Squadron Headquarters had no more than reached the concentration area when orders were received to assemble as much of the Squadron as had arrived and move out to the vicinity of Louvigny, North East of Fougères, there to await further orders. Troops "B" and "C" were released to Squadron control, and Major Cannon led the night march to vicinity Louvigny, halting North East of St. Ellier. Upon arrival in that concentration area at about 0900 12 August 1944, Troop "D" reverted to Squadron control. Lieutenant Colonel Boylan remained in the original concentration area with Headquarters and Service Troop, part of Troop "A" and Troop "E" to organize the remainder of the Squadron upon its arrival there.

Squadron remained at St. Ellier the rest of the day, and in the late afternoon Major Cannon received orders from Commanding Officer Combat Command "A" to move the Squadron (which then consisted of most of Squadron Headquarters, Troop "B", Troop "D", Troop "C" less six peeps) to a Division concentration area in the vicinity of Vaiges. Further, Major Cannon was directed to precede the column and report to Headquarters XX Corps for orders. These orders released the Squadron to Division control, and upon reporting to Division, orders were received to move the Squadron to vicinity La Ferte Bernard.

S-E-C-R-E-T

About the time that Squadron Moved out, Lieutenant Colonel Boylan arrived with Troop "A", Company "F" having halted in the vicinity of St. Ellier, being temporarily unable to get gasoline. Headquarters and Service Troop was still back at La Haye du Puits awaiting the closing in of its final vehicles. Lieutenant Colonel Boylan held his troops in place, while the rest of the Squadron marched all night through St. Suzanne, Sille le Guillaume, and on East with the mission of screening the Division Concentration area East, North East and South East of la Ferte Bernard. This was accomplished by daylight 14 August 1944.

About noon, orders were received to assemble the troops in place on their outpost lines, and to proceed North and North East screening the advance of the Division. The troops moved out immediately with Troop "D" on the West route in advance of Combat Command "A", Troop "C" on the right East route in front of Combat Command "B", and Troop "B" followed by Squadron Headquarters on the center route in front of Combat Command "R". The center axis ran through Nogent-le-Rotrou¹, La Loupe, Dreux.

Troop "D" reported light resistance on the West, and when heavier resistance was encountered, side-slipped and worked North to vicinity Senoches². Troop "C" pushed rapidly ahead on the East, reporting the first heavy resistance at Courville. At 1950 Troop "C" reported capturing 30 paratroopers West of that City and another one South of there. Meanwhile the center column had pushed up through Nogent le Rotrou, and South of La Loupe, Troop "B" located an enemy medium tank which was engaged by one platoon of light tanks and one platoon of mediums from the 17th Tank Battalion. The enemy tank escaped because of the extreme range, and the recon platoons pushed on to the outskirts of La Loupe, encountering a minefield covered by small arms fire, plus enemy tanks and infantry in the town. CCR closed up to the rear of Squadron Headquarters, and Colonel Newberry at about 2200 gave orders for Troop "B" to initiate a night attack through the town. Before this could be accomplished, orders were received from Division to halt in place, secure the column, and await orders. While halted, Troop "B" sent patrols to study the enemy situation, and lost three men at the minefield - two killed³, one missing.

During the night orders were received swinging the Division North East and East on two routes with CCA on the left North route followed by CCR, and CCB on the right South route. Troop "D" continued in front of CCA with Troop "B" and Squadron Headquarters following between CCA and CCR, and Troop "C" remained in front of CCB.

In the morning of the 15th, Troop "B" pushed on into La Loupe, which was clear of enemy. Civilians reported that enemy forces withdrew at 0700. From there the CCA - CCR column led by Troop "D" swinging North East toward Chateaufort and

¹ Nogent-le-Rotrou

² Senoches

³ B/87 14 Aug 44 Morning Report shows these as Sgt. Charles G. Muller and Pfc. Martin C. Werling.

S-E-C-R-E-T

Nogent-le-Roi. Troop "C" meanwhile had pushed so far ahead that their patrols had already covered much of the territory in front of both columns on their new axis of advance. In that area, they captured a large number of prisoners, and killed several enemy, and in addition they destroyed an enemy radio station.

From Chateauneuf East to Nogent-le-Roi was a march along which the chief obstacle turned out to be long columns of friendly troops which had come up on the right East flank of the Division and therefore lay in the path of the new axis when it was swinging from North to North East and East. As the North column approached Tremblay the horizon was lighted by huge fires which turned out to be burning German warehouses. Just beyond town the column stopped long enough for Troop "C" to join and gas up, and then the column pushed on until congested traffic made further progress painfully slow. At that point, about 3½ miles West of Nogent-le-Roi, we pulled off in a field, set up security, and caught three hours sleep.

In the morning, 16 August, we pushed on through Nogent-le-Roi, to a point just short of Faveroles, and had no sooner pulled off in the field than two low-flying ME 109's buzzed the CP. It was our first sight of enemy aircraft, but recognition was speedy and small-arms fired quick though apparently without effect.

While Squadron was pulled off the road at this point, Division was ordered to assemble South of Epernon. CCR had the mission of securing the Division Concentration area. CCA took Troop "D", and CCR sent the remainder of the Squadron (Squadron Headquarters, Troops "B", and "C") to pass through Epernon and screen the Division area. Meantime, the Commanding General was making every effort to get the entire Squadron, including both the part with Lieutenant Colonel Boylan and the part with Major Cannon, assembled in this new area.

On the march down, little resistance was met until beyond Epernon, though there was considerable sniping in that town after we passed through. On the other (South East) side of Epernon, however, Troop "B" met resistance in every direction. Approximately two km. West of Orphin, they knocked out one enemy tank at about 1900, and two hours later at the same place they knocked out two enemy armored cars. Another platoon from Troop "B" pushed on through the town of Jonvilliers and became heavily engaged, while the remaining platoon encountered approximately 40 infantrymen at Gas, and sent for Tank support. By the time the tanks arrived the infantry had been pretty well shot up and disorganized, and the tanks had a field day with the survivors.

S-E-C-R-E-T

Squadron Headquarters set up at Jonvilliers, where the screening action of both troops could be controlled, and all through the night elements of CCA (including Troop "D") moved into the area. During this same night, a sentinel, Tec 4 Delos Winchell, spotted a number of men slipping into a little woods just across the trail and not more than 25 yards from the bivouac. A close watch was maintained until dawn, at which time a cordon of men from Squadron Headquarters covered the woods with small arms from the North, while Major Cannon took his armored car around to the West. When shouts to surrender had no effect, the armored car let loose with cannister and .30 caliber while the rest of the men raked the woods with a small-arms cross-fire. Another appeal for surrender had more effect, and after the prisoners had given themselves up and the woods had been combed for bodies of wounded and dead, the score stood at five enemy dead, five wounded, fourteen prisoners, or a total of twenty-four. We suffered no casualties.

Later the same morning, 17 August, about 14 ME 109's straffed the area, and this time it appeared probable that at least one was damaged by the defensive machine-gun fire. Squadron Headquarters then moved across the trail into an orchard. Troops "B" and "C" were assembled here and Troop "D" returned to Squadron control in this area. Here finally the Squadron Commander arrived with Troops "A", "E", and Headquarters and Service Troop, and with only Company "F" missing the Squadron became a unit for the first time since the landing in France.

At the beginning of the period 11 August to 17 August, that part of the Squadron made up of Troop "A", Troop "E", and Company "F", directly under the Squadron Commander, had followed generally about one day behind the main body which was placed under command of the Executive Officer. Headquarters and Service Troop lagged behind yet another day because its final vehicles were late in arriving. The Squadron Commander led these troops along the same general routes from La Haye du Puits to La Ferte Bernard, thence to Courville. Acting on his assigned mission, he moved Troops "A" and "E" across the river to protect the open North flank of CCB, which at that time was attacking East toward Chartres. By agreement between the Squadron Commander and the Commanding General CCB, company "F" was attached to CCB to operate on their North flank. This giving additional protection to CCB and at the same time affording additional liaison to assist the reconnaissance elements in the performance of their mission. Pushing East along a route directed just North of Chartres, this force experienced many short but heavy skirmishes with small enemy resistance parties, and while suffering light casualties captured about one hundred prisoners and much German equipment - small arms etcetera. It was from this position North of Chartres that the Squadron Commander brought his units to Eperon, to reunite the Squadron and resume command of the whole. During this entire period of separate operation, he had been forced to function without a squadron headquarters

S-E-C-R-E-T

using the facilities of Troop "A". This involved serious communication and supply problems, but despite this difficulty the mission was accomplished.

The same night, the now reunited Squadron moved out on a new mission. Under Division control, the unit was ordered to reconnoiter vigorously two routes to Tilly and Malesherbes. Troop "D" was to precede CCB on Route B, while Troop "C", followed by Squadron Headquarters with Troop "B" in reserve, was to precede CCA on route A. Troop "E's" assault guns were assigned to the reconnaissance troops, SOP. Just short of Ablis, the advance was stopped by anti-tank guns, machine guns, and demolition. After remaining in place overnight Squadron Headquarters dropped back into Essards and set up a CP. A bombardment request directed against artillery pieces located by Troop "C" in the area immediately to the North of Ablis was reported to have netted not only the artillery but also several tanks as well. The CP remained here throughout 18 August at which time Company "F" arrived, and on 19 August orders came from Division to swing around and head back along the route Chartres, Chateauneuf, Brezolles, and screen the line L'aigle, Breteuil, Evreux. Troop "B" was assigned the left West portion of the line, Troop "C" the center, and Troop "A" the right (Northeast), with Troop "D" and Company "F" in reserve. While passing through Chateauneuf, Troop "D" was left behind to screen the move of the Division from the South and Southwest, proceeding to rejoin the Squadron at the CP East of Brezolles when the Division had cleared Chateauneuf en route to the Division concentration area around Dreux. All three troops encountered vigorous resistance, and when the new Division order was received the following afternoon, none had yet been able to push North as far as intended.

On the afternoon of the 20th, Troop "D" was ordered to report to Lieutenant Colonel King, North East of Dreux for a special mission. The Squadron Commander was called to Division for orders while the Executive Officer ordered the troops assembled for a march back in the direction from which we had just come. Troop "C", Squadron Headquarters and Company "F" marched together to an assembly area near Maintenon, and during the black, rainy night, Troops "A" and "D" closed in. Troop "B" was ordered to the same point but due to difficulties in assembling patrols failed to arrive there on time. The new order gave the Squadron the double mission of vigorous reconnaissance in the zone of advance of the Division toward Melun and screening the left (North) flank. The plan of the Squadron Commander called for Troops "C" and "A" to divide the screening mission with Troop "C" further West, while Troop "D" should precede CCA and Troop "B" precede CCB. When Troop "B" failed to arrive in time, its mission was taken over by Company "F" which had been in Squadron reserve. Squadron Headquarters followed Troop "D" preceding CCA to the vicinity of Arpajon, and came under artillery fire just short of that town. As the situation developed, the Combat Commander

S-E-C-R-E-T

decided upon a morning attack. When the attack was launched on the morning of 22nd, it was found that the enemy had moved out during the night. Troop "A" bypassed Arpajon to the North, and the remainder of the Squadron followed CCA through Arpajon and on to Ponthiery where a bivouac was established shortly after midnight.

Squadron CP remained in this location all day 23 August. Though Troop "C" was forced out of one nearby field by artillery fire and one artillery piece was knocked out by counterbattery fire in another field, no shells landed in the CP. Meantime, Troop "A" which was screening to the North, reported heavy enemy troop concentrations observed from an OP overlooking Corbeil and Captain Wells acted as forward observer to bring artillery fire to bear on enemy vehicles along the main road into the town.

During the night of 23-24 August, a bridgehead was established across the Seine at Tilly, and a treadway bridge built. Before noon the Squadron Commander visited this bridge, and there received a verbal order from the Division Commander canceling previously assigned reconnaissance missions, and directing immediate assembly of the Squadron for a march across the Seine. Orders were also received assigning a new mission to screen the Melun bridgehead and the advance of the Division along an axis running generally East from the bridgehead, in the direction of Nanges⁴ and Provins. The march was completed in an orderly manner, shortly after nightfall Squadron headquarters closed in bivouac with Troop "D", Company "F" and Trains at St. Leu , while Troop "C" established an outpost about 300 yards to the North, Troop "A" had not yet crossed the river, and Troop "B" continued with CCB. At this time, Lieutenant Robert J. Stewart assumed command of Troop "B" vice Captain James H. Conroy, relieved.

In good time on the morning of the 25th, Company "F" moved out in the lead with Troop "D" on the left flank, Troop "B" on the right flank along the main axis Melun, Nanges, Provins, Villenauxe. About noon, Squadron Headquarters received fire from mortar or light artillery, and Troop "B" ran into AT guns. Squadron Headquarters dispersed and Commanding Officer and Executive Officer went up with Company "F". The tanks knocked out several 20 mm AT guns and one 88 in the outskirts of Voisenon. Squadron Headquarters followed Company "F" around North of the town which was not yet clear. Company "F" again encountered AT guns in woods beyond, while Squadron Headquarters again drew artillery fire. Troop "A" arrived later in the afternoon and cleared town by dismounted action while Company "F" supported by 2 assault guns from Troop "E" pushed ahead to locate the AT guns, which at first appeared to be mostly light. The Guns were in woods below the crest of a hill; tanks and assault guns had to approach across an open field and over the crest where they were sitting ducks for an enemy they could not see. Two tanks were hit (1 knocked out), and 1 man killed⁵, 2 wounded. Examination of tanks later indicated they were knocked out by 88 or 75.

- 6 -

⁴ Nangis

⁵ Possibly S/Sgt. Robert A. Mandau, who is the only 87 Rcn man thus far known to have died 25 Aug 1944.

S-E-C-R-E-T

Later in the afternoon Lieutenant Colonel McConnell⁶ came up with his assault team, and Company "F" drew back out of line of the artillery preparation and attack which followed. Squadron Headquarters remained in place and bivouacked for the night with Troop "A" and Company "F" in a leaguer.

In the morning the combat team pushed on and the entire Division was ordered to push on forward.

The 87th moved East, first on roads, then cross-country. Towards evening Troop "C" (in lead of Squadron Headquarters) encountered a pocket of Germans. They captured a Radio car and several other vehicles and took the crews prisoners. Then they knocked out small sedan and got 4 prisoners plus 1 killed. A little later a German Medical detachment surrendered with six ambulances and supply vehicles, one sedan, and two motorcycles. Approximately 97 prisoners were left with Captain Stine and a small detachment of men from Troop "C", and Squadron Headquarters moved on through.

From this point, Troop "C" led the march on East to a bivouac area South of Pecy, where Troop "C" and Squadron Headquarters closed in at about midnight.

Next morning 27 August, trains came in with gasoline and a troop Commanders meeting was held. Troop "D" was following CCA waiting for a chance to push through, and Troop "B" was following CCB, while Troop "A" and Company "F" continued to protect the left (North) flank of Division. Troop "C" and Squadron Headquarters moved East from the bivouac through Jouey-la-Chatel, where the Squadron Commander was called to Division to receive orders. Upon his return Troop "D" was attached to CCA and Troop "A" to CCB, Company "F" rejoined Squadron Headquarters. Squadron (-) assumed the mission of protecting the left flank of Division Headquarters. From this point Squadron Headquarters moved on to vic les Hantes, where a temporary CP was established, and then on to vicinity le Vezier where the Squadron (-) bivouacked for the night.

In the morning we pushed on to temporary CP vicinity Rieux and from this area Troop "B" was ordered to vicinity Nogentel, and Company "F" to Bailly to protect the West flank of Division Headquarters. At 1420 Squadron Commander was again recalled to Division to receive new orders. Troop "B" was ordered to Chateau Thierry with the mission of seizing and securing the bridge. Squadron (-) proceeded to Nogentel, CCR took over Troop "B"s mission, and Troop "B" established outposts on the Three main routes South of Chateau Thierry.

Tuesday morning Squadron (-) crossed the Marne and moved on through Ville-en-Tardenois to a bivouac area at Jonchery.

Next day, 30 August, a warning order was received, and

⁶ CO 40th Tank Battalion

S-E-C-R-E-T

in the afternoon on a fragmentary order we moved out by-passing North of Reims through Bourgogne to La Neuville-en-Tourne a fuy, where the actual Field Order (#9) was finally received.

Next morning early Squadron Headquarters moved East to protect the left North flank of Division as they moved on Verdun, with Troop "B" reconnoitering area in advance and Troop "C" in reserve. Troop "B" hit heavy resistance West of Vouziers and Squadron Headquarters held up vicinity Mount St. Martin, and Troop "C" was sent ahead as reinforcements. That afternoon orders were received to withdraw all troops below bomb-line Tourcelles-Chaumont, Sugry⁷, Falaise. Squadron moved to vicinity Brecy and bivouacked there. Troop "C" remained vicinity Falasie, and patrolled Vouziers.

After 1900 when it appeared likely that there would be no further danger of bombardment, the Squadron Commander sent Troop "C" back to Vouziers which was found to be clear of the enemy.

From the vicinity of Brecy, the Squadron moved East beyond Grandpre on 1 September, and after threading a maze of blown bridges finally arrived at Dombasle, where Troops "B", "C", and Squadron Headquarters went into Bivouac. Troop "B" was immediately ordered out to patrol the main routes through the Argonne Forest, and Troop "C" to patrol MSR between Verdun and Chalon.

(signed)
ARTHUR R. SLADE
Captain, Cavalry
Unit Historian

⁷ Sugny

S-E-C-R-E-T

HEADQUARTERS
87th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized
APO 257, U. S. Army

AFTER ACTION REPORT

FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER, 1944

On 1 September 1944, Squadron (less Troops "A" and "D" and Company "F") moved from the vicinity of BRECY to the East beyond GRANDPRE, and after threading a maze of blown bridges finally arrived at a point one kilometer East of DOMBASLE, where Troops "B" and "C" and Squadron Headquarters went into bivouac. At this time, Troops "A" and "D" were attached to Combat Commands "R" and "A" respectively, while Company "F" was guarding Division Headquarters. Almost immediately after closing in bivouac, Troop "B" was ordered out to patrol the main routes through the Argonne forest, and Troop "C" to patrol the MSR between VERDUN and CHALON. During the night, Squadron Trains joined Squadron Headquarters, all gasoline remaining in the squadron was collected and divided between these two troops, and this unit, like the rest of the Division, was left without means of moving further until more gasoline could be brought up.

These patrolling missions continued through the 2nd and 3rd of September with Squadron Headquarters and Trains remaining in place. Due to acute shortage of gasoline, daylight patrols were cut in size, but repeated reports of heavy enemy infiltration and possible counter-attacks necessitated operating night patrols at full strength.

In the evening of the 3rd, warning orders were received for assembly of the squadron at a new area approximately five miles East of VERDUN and two tentative plans were received for movement (1) to the East towards METZ or (2) to the Northeast toward LUXEMBURG. At 0915 on the 4th, Squadron Headquarters and Troop "B" moved out on a march to the new assembly area, Troop "A" joining the Squadron East of VERDUN. In the afternoon, Division furnished Troop "D" with enough gasoline to move to the new assembly area, and Troop "C" followed before dark. Attachment of the 38th Armored Infantry Battalion (less one company) was confirmed, an IPW team reported for duty, and in the evening the Squadron Commander called a staff meeting with Lieutenant Colonel EDMUND L. KEELER and Major THOMAS H. WELLS (both 38th A.I.B.) present, to discuss plans.

In the morning, the Squadron Commander reported to Division for further orders. Four assembly areas were designated along the line of departure, and upon his return the Squadron Commander assigned to each troop the mission of reconnoitering its own particular area. In the afternoon, another conference was held at Division, and at 1700 Lieutenant Colonel CHARLES E. LEYDECKER

S-E-C-R-E-T

(A.C. of S., G-3) visited the Squadron CP to confer with the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel VINCENT L. BOYLAN. He confirmed the attachment of the 38th Armored Infantry Battalion (minus), the 274th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, Companies "A" and "C" of the 17th Tank Battalion, Company "C" 33rd Armored Engineer Battalion, Company "C" 814th Tank Destroyer Battalion, and the 206th Engineer Battalion. Immediately a conference of commanding officers of all attached units and necessary staff officers was called. The mission assigned was to advance East in four columns, push through light resistance, seize and secure crossings on the Moselle River, establish a bridgehead with a reconnaissance screen in front of it, and upon being relieved by the 5th and 90th Division, to be prepared to move Northeast. The remainder of the evening was spent in briefing and in the fuller explanation of Field Order Number 10. The order divided the troops as follows:

FORCE "A"	FORCE "B"	FORCE "C"	FORCE "D"
WELLS, Comdg.	STEWART, Comdg.	BOYLAN, Comdg.	KEELER, Comdg.
A/87	B/87	D/87	C/87
4 Plt. E/87	3 Plt. E/87	1 Plt. E/87	2 Plt. E/87
B (-) 17	1 Plt. F/87	87 (-)	38 (-)
	1 Plt. B/87	A/17	A/274
	2 Plt. C/33	C/38	F (-) 87
		C (-) 814	3 Plt. C/814
		274 (-)	3 Plt. C/33
		C (-) 33	
		IPW	

All columns reported crossing the Line of Departure by 0330.

Force "A" was assigned the Southern (right flank) route through VIGNEULLES, CHAMBLEY and GORZE, and pushed on to within ten miles of the river before meeting enemy resistance -- chiefly small arms, with road lightly mined. Bypassing the mines and continuing East, the column ran into heavy artillery and mortar fire. An attempt was made to bypass to the South, and a little farther East contact was made with Troop "B", 43rd Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized. With the aid of a guide from this troop, patrols were sent forward with an attached Engineer reconnaissance officer, to try to reach the river. Despite artillery fire, a patrol succeeded in reaching the river, but found no favorable spot for a crossing. Captain WELLS then assembled his command just West of PAGNY, refueled, and upon order moved at 0400 (7 September) to join the main body just East of DONCOURT.

Force "B" crossed the Line of Departure at 0300, following a route generally through MARS-LA-TOUR, VIONVILLE, REZONVILLE, and GRAVELOTTE. The column reached REZONVILLE at approximately 0800, and as the head of the column passed through town the enemy opened up with direct fire anti-tank weapons. This was followed by heavy mortar fire on the town as the column deployed to the fields on both sides. In order to continue the advance

S-E-C-R-E-T

the Force Commander, First Lieutenant ROBERT J. STEWART, called for fire from the M8 Assault guns and the attached platoon of medium tanks on the woods to the South of GRAVELOTTE, and with the attached platoon of light tanks in the lead, the force advanced to the edge of the woods. As the light tanks approached a minefield Southwest of town, direct anti-tank fire and observed mortar and artillery fire forced them to withdraw. Force "B" withdrew to VIONVILLE, where it was reinforced by a platoon of light tanks and four assault guns from the 43rd Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized. The reconnaissance troop (B/87) was sent to an assembly area one-half mile West of MARS-LA-TOUR, and the Third Platoon was ordered to establish liaison with Force "A" on the right South flank, and to reconnoiter for a bypass around GRAVELOTTE to the South and East. This platoon found no bypass, and joined Force "A" which was stopped West of GORZE at that time. The remainder of Force "B", reinforced by the elements from the 43rd Cavalry, attempted to swing around the woods to the South and East of GRAVELOTTE, to accomplish a wider envelopment. This move was also stopped by anti-tank fire from the woods and by observed mortar and artillery fire. The force was reorganized East of VIONVILLE, and was at that point when the Advance Guard of CC "B" came up. All the foregoing information plus warning of the mined bridge and minefield West of GRAVELOTTE was transmitted to the Advance Guard, which immediately deployed for an attack. Following an artillery preparation and an advance wave of tanks from the Advance Guard, and with continued artillery support, Force "B" moved toward GRAVELOTTE. By this time the bridge was blown, and since a minefield stretched to the South of the bridge, Force "B" bypassed both to the North, and then bypassed GRAVELOTTE to the South and East. One-half mile Southeast of the town, this advance was stopped by anti-tank guns in depth along the draw leading to the Moselle River. The assault guns of Force "B", reinforced by those of the 43rd Cavalry and by the attached medium tank platoon, engaged the anti-tank guns with indirect fire and reduced the opposition sufficiently to allow elements of the CC "B" Advance Guard to proceed down the draw at dark. Force "B" was then instructed to hold in position one-half mile Southeast of GRAVELOTTE, and did so until ordered to return to Squadron early next morning.

Force "D" moved east along the line North of the main effort, with Troop "C" in advance. About one mile West of BRIEY enemy mortar-fire was encountered, plus three enemy tanks. The enemy withdrew and the combat team continued through BRIEY with Troop "C" still in the lead. They had started to force a crossing of the stream just East of BRIEY when the order came calling them South to join Squadron Headquarters. Swinging South then East, enemy infantry was encountered just Southwest of VERNEVILLE, well dug in and supported by fire from pill-boxes and artillery. A firefight ensued with the reconnaissance troop, the assault gun platoon, and the tank destroyer platoon taking part. While Troop "C" remained in position as a covering force, the remainder of the force withdrew three miles West of VERNEVILLE, where Troop "C" rejoined them. Here they reorganized. About this time CC "A"

S-E-C-R-E-T

arrived, and Troop "C" went into bivouac until morning, when they rejoined the Squadron at the DONCOURT assembly area.

Force "C", representing the main effort, was divided in three parts. First came the reconnaissance troop ("D") commanded by Captain WILLIAM A. RAU, then the Advance Guard, commanded by Major CHARLES A. CANNON, JR. (the Advance Guard consisted of two platoons from Company "A" 17th Tank Battalion plus the company headquarters, Company "C" 38th Armored Infantry Battalion, and Battery "C" 274th Armored Field Artillery Battalion). This column moved out in advance of the main body, which remained under the personal command of Lieutenant Colonel VINCENT L. BOYLAN. After crossing the Line of Departure, the column proceeded through ETAIN, CONFLANS, and DONCOURT to the vicinity of JOUAVILLE, where the Advance Guard closed up on the reconnaissance troop. From this point they advanced slowly until enemy anti-tank guns were encountered in the outskirts of VERNEVILLE. Captain RAU called up his assault guns and laid fire on the town, and Major CANNON brought up a platoon of medium tanks astride the road to help develop the situation. Upon arriving outside VERNEVILLE the tanks came under artillery fire, and Battery "C" 274th Armored Field Artillery was immediately ordered to shell the town. While the Artillery was going into position, an attack was organized with two platoons of medium tanks followed by one platoon of infantry and the reconnaissance troop. The order was to push forward, bypass the town to the South, and for the tanks and infantry to rally East of the town while Troop "D" was to pass through and continue on the route of advance. The tanks were ordered forward under friendly artillery fire, and advanced as ordered to the East side of town, by-passing the town to the South. The infantry platoon and reconnaissance troop, however, upon reaching the crest of the ridge just West of VERNEVILLE, again came under heavy artillery fire, making it necessary to drop back temporarily, reorganize, and again push forward. On the second move forward the infantry and reconnaissance by-passed the town and joined the tanks on the east side. Following these troops came Battery "B" 274th Field Artillery replacing Battery "C" and two platoons of tank destroyers sent as replacements to the advance guard by Lieutenant Colonel BOYLAN. Although the artillery fire drove the enemy infantry from the town, it was later learned that they returned and reoccupied the village. The decision to bypass the town and continue the advance without deciding to stop and mop up was influenced by the necessity of advancing swiftly.

Having reorganized East of VERNEVILLE, some delay was caused by a change in orders from higher headquarters, shifting the route of advance from East to Southeast and South. Moving out again and passing the deserted village of MALMAISON to a ridge just North of GRAVELOTTE, the advance elements again drew heavy artillery fire. Major CANNON again determined to attack astride the road from MALMAISON to GRAVELOTTE, using tanks, tank destroyers, and infantry, supported by the battery of artillery. While the attack was being organized, the artillery shelled the town of GRAVELOTTE and the ridge just South of the town. At 1720 the attack jumped off, our artillery having apparently silenced

S-E-C-R-E-T

that of the enemy. As the attack progressed down the ridge toward the town, enemy small arms fire was drawn from every side, from dug-in positions around the town and from the surrounding woods. The two platoons of medium tanks moved forward boldly, reaching their objective, one platoon completely circling the town. During this time, however, heavy enemy artillery fire again fell on our advancing troops, and it was discovered that this fire was coming from several enemy batteries, firing at long range from points several thousand yards Southeast of GRAVELOTTE. In spite of the fact that this artillery fire prevented the infantry from lending the tanks their support, the tanks held their positions around the town, under enemy artillery fire, until about 1900. It was evident that the enemy had been driven from his dug-in positions in and around the town, but we were unable to neutralize the enemy artillery fire. Consequently, upon orders, the advance elements withdrew behind the ridge at MALMAISON to reorganize, leaving enough force on the battlefield to protect our own wounded until they could be evacuated. The evacuation was completed by 2000, being accomplished by the combined medical detachments of the 87th Cavalry and the 274th Field Artillery. Casualties were not heavy except in one infantry platoon which became panic stricken after their platoon leader was killed. Reconnaissance was completed at MALMAISON about dark, and Major CANNON was ordered to report to Lieutenant Colonel BOYLAN to make plans for the next day's attack.

During all this action, Squadron Headquarters with the remainder of Force "C" followed along the same general axis of advance. The main body moved out at about 0745 and proceeded without interruption to JARNEY where the column halted. At 1030 the Army Commander, General GEORGE S. PATTON, came to the head of the column, inquired about the situation, and spurred on to immediate advances. "What I want is audacity!" At 1300 a temporary CP was established near DONCOURT, and at 1600 Squadron Headquarters moved to an assembly area one mile East of that town, where the Liaison Officer arrived with orders from Division. At 1940 the Squadron Commander ordered his forces to concentrate at this assembly area in preparation for an attack in force East through GRAVELOTTE. During the night, vehicles were gassed, and dismounted patrols from Troop "D" discovered that the enemy had evacuated the town of GRAVELOTTE, taking their casualties with them.

About 0500 next morning, Force "D" joined Force "C", and Lieutenant Colonel BOYLAN went forward to organize another coordinated tank-infantry-artillery attack along the road running East of GRAVELOTTE toward ROZERIEULLES. The task force for this attack, consisting of Troop "D" 87th Cavalry with one platoon from Troop "E", Company "A" 17th Tank Battalion, the 38th Armored Infantry Battalion less one company, and the entire 274th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, was organized and ready to attack at 1100. At 1115 the 38th Armored Infantry Battalion was detached, and the attack therefore had to be cancelled. By 1710 all attached units reverted to Division control, and at 1830 the entire Squadron was closed in bivouac around the Command Post. Most of the

S-E-C-R-E-T

attached units moved out the same night. The Squadron remained in the assembly area just East of DONCOURT through the 8th and 9th, resting, reorganizing, working on maintenance, and awaiting a new mission. On the evening of the 9th, the Squadron Commander was called to Division for orders. Upon his return, he placed all troops on a one-hour alert, and assigned to Troop "C" with Troop "F" in reserve the mission of closing a gap and establishing liaison with the 90th Division on their left West flank and the 5th Division on their right East flank. Troop "C" moved out at 2330, Company "F" at 2346.

About an hour later, Troop "C" reported their CP location at ST. MARIE AUX CHENES, and by 0150 contact had been established with the 2nd Combat Team of the 5th Division, at ST. PRIVAT. At 0340 they established liaison with the 90th Division, and continued this mission, pushing out patrols to the North and Northeast, until relieved by Troop "A".

Troop "A" moved out from the Squadron assembly area at 2000 on the 10th, with orders to hold at all costs the line BRIEY-ST.PRIVAT, maintaining liaison with the 5th Division on the right and the 90th on the left. After relief was affected, Troop "C" returned to Squadron assembly area, closing in bivouac at 0235, 11 September 1944.

At 1140 Troop "B" was given the mission of outposting a line between the 2nd Combat Team, 5th Division, at GRAVELOTTE, and the 11th Combat Team, 5th Division, at GORZE; liaison was established with both units by 1430. Then while Troops "A" and "B" continued their missions, the Squadron Commander was called to Division and given the mission of relieving the Blue Battalion, 2nd Combat Team (5th Division) on a Northsouth line just East of MALMAISON and GRAVELOTTE, maintaining contact with the 357th Infantry on the left North flank and the 11th Combat Team (same division) on the right South flank in the vicinity of GORZE. At 1930 the Squadron Commander returned and briefed the commanders of Troops "C" and "D", and at 2130 the Executive Officer, troop commanders, and Communication Officer visited the forward CP of Blue Battalion, located in an old chateau just West of MALMAISON, and planned the relief. Troop "C" cleared bivouac at 2327 and reported in position at 0100. Troop "D" was in position by 0145. Organization of the positions continued through the night and early morning, and at 0930 the Squadron CP moved up to the chateau previously used as CP by the battalion relieved.

During the morning, both the Division Commander, Major General LINDSEY MCD SILVESTER, and the Division G-3, Lieutenant Colonel LEYDECKER, visited the CP to discuss the situation with the Squadron Commander. Even in daylight, the undergrowth in the draw running North and South about 500 yards East of MALMAISON and GRAVELOTTE was so dense as to make movement difficult and observation very limited. The occupation of this line had to be entirely dismounted, with vehicles left under guard behind a sheltering ridge.

S-E-C-R-E-T

At 2030, Troop "B" was recalled from its previous mission and ordered to move into position in preparation for a dawn attack from North to South, to clear enemy infantry out of the draw. The final conference for coordination of artillery fire and completion of plan was held at 0200 on the 12th, and at 0715, following a short but intense artillery preparation, Troop "B" jumped off. It soon became apparent not only that the enemy had well-placed mortars and artillery, but also that the dense jungle of trees and undergrowth favored their defense. Despite close artillery support, progress was slow and difficult. The estimated enemy strength was 400, and they were well dug in with plenty of ammunition, rations, and automatic weapons. At 1200 Troop "C" was called on to support the Troop "B" attack, and at 1300 the Squadron Commander went forward for a personal reconnaissance of the action. The contact was so close that Lieutenant Colonel BOYLAN was able to engage the enemy in conversation, and he called to them to surrender, but without success. At this time the Squadron Surgeon, Captain EDWARD J. HACKETT, was mortally wounded while crawling forward to give aid to Sergeant Rafus, also killed in action.

Troop "A" was recalled from its previous mission, and at 1600 ordered to relieve Troop "B" in the East side of the draw, while "B" moved about to the West. Both continued to attack. With nightfall further progress was impossible in such unfavorable terrain, and all troops organized their lines and dug in to hold.

Next morning the Squadron Commander was called to Division, and returned about noon with movement orders. Company "F" and Squadron Trains moved immediately to the vicinity of SPONVILLE, the remainder following later in the evening as the troops were relieved by elements of the 90th Division. The Squadron closed in bivouac there at 0630. Troop "A" was attached to CC "R", Troop "B" to CC "B", and Troop "D" to CC "A", each taking its attached assault gun platoon. The remainder of the squadron was given the mission of crossing the Moselle on Division Order, furnishing right flank protection for Forward Echelon Division Headquarters. One platoon from Troop "C" was sent ahead to reconnoiter routes to the PAGNY bridge-site.

Squadron minus remained in the SPONVILLE assembly area doing maintenance and awaiting orders until 1645, 16th September when they swung down to the vicinity of PRENY, continuing the mission previously assigned. To further secure the flank, elements of Troop "C" outposted XAMMES, THIACOURT, and the road junction Southeast of JAULNY. Next day a limited reconnaissance of the PONT-A-MOUSSON area was made and it was found to be clear of enemy. On the 18th, First Lieutenant RICHARD MONTGOMERY was sent as liaison officer to the 90th Division immediately to the South, and he remained there with a radio car, organizing the flow of information across the corps boundary. At 1600 on the 19th, the Squadron Commander was given the order to cross the Moselle River and screen the right South flank of the Division bridgehead from

S-E-C-R-E-T

South of VITTONVILLE to BOUXIERES, relieving the task force of CC "A" then in that area. Troop "C" cleared bivouac at 1845, followed by Squadron Headquarters and Company "F". The crossing was made at PAGNY-SUR-MOSELLE, Squadron Headquarters established a CP at CHAMPEY-SUR-MOSELLE at 1945, and at 2040 Troop "C" reported in position and the relief of the CC "A" task force was complete. Company "F" remained in reserve with the headquarters and the trains remained in the previous area.

Next morning, Squadron was assigned the additional mission of patrolling the MSR by noon of that day (20th September). A part of Troop "C" was withdrawn from the flank for this purpose, and by 0910 reported the route clear. The situation remained much the same for the next few days, with small patrols executing limited reconnaissance missions, until 2000 on the 24th, when Troop "C" was relieved by the reconnaissance troop of the 5th Division, and Troops "A", "B" and "D" reverted to squadron control in the old assembly area back in SPONVILLE. Shortly after midnight, Squadron closed in bivouac in the same location previously occupied on the 15th and 16th. The entire march was made under radio silence.

The following afternoon (25 September), Troop "A" was attached to CC "R", Troop "B" to CC "B" and Troop "D" to CC "A", and the Squadron Commander received a movement order for the march to HASSELT, BELGIUM. While the remainder of the squadron was preparing for the march, one platoon of Company "F" was ordered at 1545 to accompany and protect the Division Commander's party on the march, and a few minutes later they moved out on that mission. The remainder of the Squadron remained in place overnight, moving out the next morning at 0800, still under radio silence. The original plan was to move to bivouac in the vicinity of HASSELT, BELGIUM, via MARS-LA-TOUR, CONFLANS-EN-JARNEY, ETAIN (by-passing the town), LONGUYON, ARLON (BELGIUM), BASTOGNE, MARCHE, HUY, and ST. TROND. It was extended, however, and the whole Division continued to an assembly area in EYSDEN, BELGIUM, Squadron closing in bivouac there at 0930, 27 September.

At noon, Troops "A", "B" and "D" reverted to Squadron control and the Squadron Commander reported to Division for orders. He returned and at 1400 put out a warning order to troop commanders and staff to prepare for a move on Division order, North to the vicinity of OPLOO, HOLLAND. After a series of alerts and a change in destination, Squadron moved out at 0545, 29th September, and at 1035 closed in bivouac just West of DEURNE, HOLLAND, where orders were received attaching Troop "B" to CC "B" and Troop "D" to CC "A". The remainder of the squadron remained in place, prepared for movement on order to screen the rear of the Division within the Division Zone.

(signed)
ARTHUR R. SLADE
Captain, Cavalry
Unit Historian

S-E-C-R-E-T

HEADQUARTERS
87TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON MECHANIZED
A.P.O. #257, U.S. ARMY

ARS/ejm

AFTER ACTION REPORT

FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER, 1944

As of 0001, 1 October 1944, Troop B was attached to CCB, Troop D to CCA, and the remainder of the Squadron was in bivouac just west of Duerne, with orders to move to De Rips in the morning. At 0744 Troop C crossed the IP on the march to De Rips and at 0909, squadron minus, less Trains, closed in bivouac there. The same morning, the Squadron commander was called to Division, and upon his return he alerted Troop A for a new mission. This mission consisted in protecting the rear of Division Headquarters along the canal Southwest of St. Antonis, while maintaining liason with Division troops on the right west flank and with CCA on the left East flank. After a personal reconnaissance of the terrain, the troop commander, Captain JOHN W. WELLS, JR., moved the troops up to the canal and reported in position at 1900.

Meanwhile, Troop C was given the mission of patrolling the road from De Rips to Duerne⁸, to insure against infiltration by enemy patrols. This mission continued until 1120 the next day, when Troop C was attached to CCR and a platoon of Company F took over the patrolling mission.

In the evening of the 2nd while the remainder of Troop A was continuing its security mission, one platoon from that Troop supplemented by elements from Squadron Headquarters and commanded by the Squadron Executive Officer, Major CHARLES A. CANNON, JR., established an ambush southwest of Duerne. This ambush reported in position at 2130, and returned to Squadron Headquarters at 0430 next morning reporting no enemy seen.

At 0700 on the 3rd, Troop B returned to Squadron control, and at 1041 closed in bivouac vicinity of Squadron Headquarters, taking over the Duerne patrol. The patrols continued all day, and in the evening one platoon from Troop B plus elements of Squadron Headquarters commanded by Lieutenant Colonel VINCENT L. BOYLAN, set up an ambush in the vicinity of Liesel. This ambush likewise failed to trap any enemy.

Throughout the 4th and 5th, patrolling continued without change until 1630 on the 5th, when Troop B was assigned the mission of protecting road blocks on the Division North flank, in the area vacated by CCB. Company F then took over the Duerne patrols.

On the morning of the 6th Major CANNON lead a patrol made up of elements of Troop A and Squadron Headquarters East toward the canal on a reconnaissance mission with the added purpose of conducting Bazooka training. This patrol engaged the enemy at 683271, killing

- 1 -

⁸ Duerne

S-E-C-R-E-T

one and capturing 23. While they were gone, at 1100, Troop B was relieved of the Road Block mission and closed in bivouac at 1150, taking over the Duerne patrols.

In the afternoon Colonel RICHARD B. EVANS (C.O. Div. Tns.) and Lieutenant Colonel CHARLES E. LEYDECKER (Div. G-3) visited the C.P. from 1500 to 1630 and assigned the mission of patrolling the Division MSR from Duerne (exclusive) to Asten (exclusive). Troop B left one platoon at 684271, to observe enemy action in that area, and with the remainder of the Troop moved out on the new mission. Company F again took over the Duerne Patrols.

Just before noon on the 7th the C.O. was called to Division and sent back a warning order to prepare to move. 1310 head of the column moved out, and at 1830 Squadron Headquarters closed in bivouac ½ km north east of Zommeren⁹, with Company F, Headquarters and Service Troop, and Trains.

Meanwhile, at noon the Troop B platoon at 684271 engaged enemy forces at 690269 and drove them back, thus securing a good position at the corner of the canal, from which enemy activity, dug-in positions, and pill-boxes could be observed. They held this position for approximately three hours, then were driven back by heavy enemy mortar and anti-tank fire, losing one armored car. They returned to their original position and held there until ordered to rejoin the remainder of the Squadron at Zommeren.

Early next morning, 8 October, troops A and B were attached to CCB, and formed parts of two task forces organized by the combat command. At 1300, Troop C returned to Squadron control, and with one platoon of Company F attached, was given the mission of providing security for the 440th Armored Field Artillery, vicinity Behelp. This situation remained generally the same, with Troop C pushing patrols generally to the South and East, until 1535 on the 11th, when Troop C was relieved of this security mission and moved to Meijel with the mission of driving out small enemy pockets and patrols and reporting all enemy activity in that area. Company F less one platoon then took over the security of the 440th, remaining platoon providing security for Squadron Headquarters.

In an effort to provide recreation for the troops, movies were shown in the Trains area next to Squadron Headquarters throughout this period and up to the 20th of the month, using the maintenance tent as a theatre. Special Services furnished films, and the Squadron used its own projector and operators, permitting such personnel as could be spared to attend the shows.

On the morning of the 12th, Troop C returned to the vicinity of Behelp with the mission of patrolling the area between the Ospel-Meijel Road and the Canal Du Nord, and the same evening Troop C, Troop A, and Company F (less one platoon) were attached to CCR. This

⁹ Someren

S-E-C-R-E-T

left only Squadron Headquarters and Trains at Zommeren, with one platoon from Company F for security.

For a little more than a week, the 87th was a squadron without a troop, then on the evening of the 20th, new operations instructions were received. These instructions assigned to the squadron the mission of establishing a counter reconnaissance screen along the line Liesel, Meijel, Nederweert, and returned troops A, B, C, Company F(-) to Squadron control as of 211200, with responsibility for sector effective same time. A meeting of troop commanders and staff was called at 2000, at which time a verbal order was issued dividing the sector into three zones, with Troop B in the North from Liesel to Heitrac¹⁰, Troop C in the central zone including Meijel, and Troop A in the South from a point opposite Stokers Horst on down to Nederweert. Company F was charged with the security of Squadron Headquarters and the 440th. Troop D remained attached to CCA.

At daybreak on the 21st, each troop sent patrols to reconnoiter its zone, and by 1330 the counter-reconnaissance screen was in position, with one platoon of Company F securing Squadron Headquarters 3 km Southeast of Asten on the Asten Meijel Road and the remainder of the company furnishing security for the 440th.

For the next few days there was little activity excepting during the hours of darkness, when our own patrols and enemy patrols were both active. Since the enemy held a wide strip of ground West of the canal, getting across was no problem for them. Our patrols, however, had to slip through the enemy lines to reach the canal, and although the enemy was alert and the patrols were not always able to get through, enough did get through to perform reconnaissance of banks, locks, and bridge-sites. All along the line, listening-posts were pushed forward under cover of darkness and were withdrawn before daylight, and several enemy patrols were detected and driven back.

General LINDSEY MC D. SILVESTER visited the CP at 1130 on the 22nd, and on the 23rd, Lieutenant General O'CONNOR (Commanding General British VIII Corps.) visited the CP on a tour of inspection.

At 0900 the following day, Troop D was released to Squadron control, closing in bivouac with Squadron headquarters at 1215. During the afternoon, Troop D officers reconnoitered the Northern zone and at 1712 the troop moved out to relieve Troop B. The relief was complete at 1950, and late that night Troop B closed in bivouac in the area just vacated by Troop D.

During the same day, civilians suddenly began to leave Meijel in large numbers. Efforts were made to determine the cause of their sudden decision to leave, but although it appeared that the Burgomaster had advised them to leave, the only reason offered was that they were afraid of the enemy artillery. Troop C spent the day improving their positions, while increased enemy activity was reported all along the front.

¹⁰ Heitrac

S-E-C-R-E-T

In the Troop A zone, Lieutenant GEORGE D. MONAGHAN led a twelve-man patrol, consisting of two sections with six men in each, down to the canal one-half mile from Nederweert. The advance section had small arms and radio, the rear section, mortar and machinegun. This patrol ran into an ambush, was cut in two, pinned by fire, and only one man from the second section escaped. The first section escaped by crawling approximately 1000 yards on their bellies in a small ditch less than a foot deep.

Early in the morning of the 26th Troop C intercepted a three-man enemy patrol, and killed one through the others escaped. Troop B was in reserve, working on maintenance and resupply, with the Squadron staff coordinating the servicing of the troop in an effort to get it finished promptly so that the men might get some rest.

From 1600 to 1745, approximately 130 rounds of enemy artillery fell in the Troop D area, especially along the Liesel-Meijel Road. Troop A reported a 150-man column moving West from Stokers Horst, and adjusted artillery fire on it. Numerous civilians' reports of enemy men and vehicles were received. During the night, listening posts reported sounds of enemy motor and horse-drawn vehicles across the canal, and in the vicinity of Stokers Horst, tank movement and the sound of a motorboat were reported.

At about 0610, a heavy enemy artillery preparation began along the entire front within the Squadron zone, accompanied by increasing small-arms fire. By 0630 it was becoming increasingly apparent that the small-arms fire was coming from West of the canal, and by 0645 this fact was definitely established. Then at about 0700 the artillery slackened.

The town of Meijel was lightly held by the headquarters platoon of Troop C plus one platoon of assault guns from Troop E - a total of 43 men. Visibility was limited to about fifty yards because of a heavy morning mist. Then a few minutes after the artillery stopped, a German officer suddenly stood up about 40 yards from the defensive position, shouting orders. Immediately about 200 enemy soldiers stood up all around him and behind him, and began to attack. They came in three waves, standing up, and they appeared to be drunk or doped. The defenders held their fire until the first wave was within thirty yards, then opened up with every available weapon. The two assault guns were in the line, blasting away at ranges of 60, 50, and even 40 yards. All of the first and second wave were either killed or wounded excepting a few who filtered around the flanks, but the third wave came in throwing hand grenades, and they over-ran the position and gained the houses, from which they opened fire.

Meanwhile, the flank platoon had been called in to support, but as the enemy attack continued the position became untenable and at 0830 it was decided to withdraw and try to save the vehicles.

S-E-C-R-E-T

About a quarter of a mile out of town, the troop was met by Major CANNON, followed closely by Troop B. The reserve troop formed a defensive line through which Troop C withdrew, then both troops parked their vehicles and organized for a counter-attack. At 0930 Lieutenant Colonel BOYLAN arrived and took command, pushing the attack off at 1010, with the two troops astride the road - C on the North and B on the South - and all four assault guns in support. The two troops pushed ahead side by side until Troop B reached the Eastern edge of the woods just West of Meijel. Here, at the edge of a 500 yard open field, Troop B was stopped by automatic weapons, small arms, artillery, and mortars. They held at the edge of the woods, and Troop C pushed some distance farther, but was forced back to a point on line with Troop B. With the arrival of the light tank company (F/87), Troop C organized for another attack along the same 200 yard front North of the Asten Meijel road. On this attack, the first platoon of the tank company swung wide to the left, protecting the left flank, while the second proceeded down the road, peeling off to the left in direct support, and the third followed down the road in local reserve. The flanking platoon took some prisoners, and one tank from the 2nd platoon was sent over to take them back. On the way across, it was hit by bazooka fire from the rear and knocked out. One after another, three tanks from the first platoon were knocked out in the same way, so that only the platoon leader, Lieutenant ALBERT D. BRYANT, and one other tank were left. These two pushed on into the woods vicinity Hof, and never came back. Meanwhile, two of the remaining tanks of the 2nd platoon were knocked out in rapid succession by an anti-tank weapon, and the attack again fell back to the line from which it started.

At this time, a high explosive shell burst near the Squadron Commander, and the commanders of Troop C and Company F. Captain JOSEPH L. RAMSEY was wounded by flying steel fragments, and replaced. Lieutenant RICHARD MONTGOMERY suffered from the concussion and also had to be relieved. Lieutenant FRED A. LEWELLEN was placed in command of Troop C and organized five ten-man bazooka teams to make a coordinated attack with the remaining tanks. The remaining tank platoon was short one tank, so one of the two remaining tanks from the second platoon was attached, and the five tanks, commanded by Lieutenant CHARLES G. GOOD, moved out supported by ten dismounted men each. The objective was a hedgerow North of the road and just outside the town. This objective was no more than reached, and the men had not yet had time to dig in when a heavy caliber anti-tank gun opened up, and two tanks were burning. Two of the tanks withdrew behind a house South of the road, and the third returned to the shelter of the woods; this left the dismounted men without tank support, under a hail of artillery, mortar, automatic weapons, small arms, and direct HE fire. Lieutenant CARL F. COOKE had been killed, and under heavy fire with their positions threatened on all sides the men became confused and fell back more or less in disorder.

CCR had assumed responsibility for the sector at 1300, but the

S-E-C-R-E-T

87th continued to bear the brunt of the attack until 1610, when the 48th Armored Infantry Battalion arrived, passing through Troop C and Troop B positions. Troop B withdrew to their right rear flank as ordered. Then enemy tanks and artillery appeared from the South end of town and proceeded up the road, directing a hail of machinegun fire against the positions on either side. When these positions fell back, Troop B withdrew under heavy fire from the front and from the left flank.

The remaining light tanks from Company F resisted briefly, the company commander's gunner bouncing four rounds 37mm AP off the leading tank, but lieutenant GOOD'S tank was promptly knocked out and further resistance was clearly useless. Nevertheless, Lieutenant ROBERT C. OSTDICK refused to leave with the rest, and was left behind.

Under cover of darkness, both troops reorganized, and troop C moved to protect the left flank of Company C, 48th AIB, North of the road. The 1st platoon was tied in with the infantry, the 2nd platoon pushed forward, and the 3rd turned back to protect the extended North flank. Troop B was sent back and across the Willem Canal at bridge 613054 into the Troop A zone, to outpost the Ospel-Meijel Road.

In the Northern zone, held by Troop D, enemy infantry attacked at 0700 enemy infantry attacked in the vicinity of Heitrack; Troop Headquarters was moved up in support of this section of the line, and the attack angled off to the South toward Neerkant, where a simultaneous attack was in progress. At this point the line was seriously threatened, but prompt artillery support plus intensive use of small arms stopped the enemy 100 yards in front of the defensive positions. In answer to a call for support, Lieutenant Colonel JOHN P. WEMPLE arrived at 0830 with one company of medium tanks, one of light, and one of Tank Destroyers. Troop D was then attached to this force, which in turn was a part of CCB. One platoon of mediums was placed with the third platoon near Neerkant, one with the Troop E assault guns at Heitract, and one North of Heitract. The light tank company was in general support in the woods North of Heitract but was almost immediately moved out to provide security for the 440th. The Tank Destroyer company was split up to cover avenues of approach and provide protection against enemy armor.

About noon, a Troop D M8 armored car was hidden behind haystacks and buildings at the Hoogebrug road junction, when three tiger tanks moved slowly down the road, about 300-400 yards apart. The armored car allowed the first Tiger to pass, and then from a range of approximately 15 yards, pumped six rounds of 37mm AP into the rear of the tank. The tank was ditched, and the crew abandoned it. At least one member of the crew was killed as he fled. Meanwhile, the second Tiger continued up the road toward the junction, and the third swung off to the North to flank the armored car. The armored car escaped when the Tiger was within 200 yards. Later in the afternoon three TD's and one medium were sent to get a Tiger; three TD's and one medium were lost.

S-E-C-R-E-T

Task Force Wemple held until 1645, when a strong enemy force estimated at 20 large tanks, supported by infantry, approached Neerkant from the Southeast. C/48 had moved one platoon East of Neerkant and when the attack came this platoon was cut off along with the third platoon of D/87. One of the supporting mediums was knocked out and the remainder withdrew. The enemy took Neerkant but the Infantry filtered back Southwest to rejoin their company and the reconnaissance platoon filtered back to the Northwest. The line held by D/87 at nightfall swung generally North from Heitrack, which was also in enemy hands by this time.

In the Southern zone, on the morning of the 27th, Troop A was holding the line Stokers Horst - Nederweert, West of Canal Du Nord, with a series of strong points consisting of about eight men each, each point having one light machine gun, and about half having mortars (50 mm and 60 mm). The distance between points was 500, 600, and in one case 800 yards; positions were changed from time to time. Seven men from the maintenance section were securing the bridge across the Willem Canal at 613054, and the maintenance Armored car plus six men from Troop E were holding the road-block on the West side of the canal about ½ mile out of Nederweert. During the night, the enemy moved up dismounted men, and at dawn laid down a heavy artillery barrage. This barrage was laid chiefly on Nederweert and along the banks of the Willem Canal; probably the reason more was not laid on Troop positions was that enemy infantry was too close to permit it. Immediately after bombardment, attacks began in the vicinity of Budschoep and Kreijel Nieuw en Winnerstraat. In at least one case the enemy was led by a civilian, and in another case the enemy infiltrated through between the strong points and appeared behind them in British and American uniforms, attracting the attention of Lieutenant WILLIAM H. MCMILLAN and shooting him when he exposed himself. The troop was forced to withdraw to the North, where the men from the strong-points were reassembled and a new line organized. At dusk, task force Nelson from CCA, consisting of 1 Company medium tanks, 1 platoon TD's and one 25-man infantry platoon arrived at bridge across Willem Canal (613054). By 0200 the infantry were in place in the line, but the vehicles remained West of the bridge.

Troop B arrived at midnight, but due to the dispositions of friendly and enemy troops in the area, it was impossible to reach the Ospel Meijel Road with vehicles. The troop commander personally made a dismounted reconnaissance, then dismounted the troop and outposted a portion of the Horic¹¹-Meijel road. Even stretching both troops to the limit, however, a wide gap remained between this extended flank and the friendly positions along the Asten-Meijel road. Only swampy terrain and ignorance of this weakness barred the enemy's advance through the gap.

The morning of the 28th brought heavy enemy artillery fire in the sector West of Meijel. Troop C held its positions under this fire until 1000, when about 65 enemy came up in front of the 1st platoon. These were blasted back by artillery fire and assault guns. At 1600 the enemy made a determined attack along this whole front. The line held, except the 2nd platoon, which, being pushed forward

¹¹ Horik

S-E-C-R-E-T

was flanked on both sides. Moreover, heavy mortar fire caved in foxholes and filled carbines with dirt so that they failed to function. The platoon leader Lieutenant CHARLES A. ROBERTSON, JR, ordered his men to withdraw to a ditch between the 1st and 3rd platoons, while he personally covered their withdrawal with a machine gun. He was wounded at least once but continued firing; he was left behind, and never got back. The platoon (2nd) continued back past the ditch, and the 3rd extended South to close gap. Enemy tanks and infantry over-ran this line, but the troops held their positions and remained through the night although some enemy had got through behind them.

In the Northern zone, the 1st platoon of Troop D had repelled an aggressive enemy patrol during the night, with casualties on both sides. At daylight, the platoon leader's light tank (substitute for M8 Armored Car) was knocked out by an 88, and when a section from the second platoon arrived to support, the armored car of the platoon sergeant who was leading the section was also hit by 88mm fire and burned. Enemy tanks and infantry continued to advance, and Troop D was driven back to the vicinity of Liesel, where the 1st platoon was relieved by Company D 31st Tank Battalion. At this point companies A and C of the 23rd Infantry attacked astride the road, and as night fell Troop D outposted a line from C/48 at Huize De Werf to 23rd AIB near Heitrack.

In the Southern sector, dawn of the 28th brought more enemy attacks, and the second platoon Troop A was isolated. About 0900, Lieutenant Colonel MENTE announced that Troop A was attached to CCA and that Captain NELSON would be in command in that sector. With the help of tanks, the 2nd platoon was extricated, the lines shortened, and the infantry (which had withdrawn) was placed back in position. The tanks were withdrawn, and Captain WELLS moved the assault guns in to replace them and provide support. Troop B maintained throughout the day its positions along the Horick-Meijel road. During the night, the tanks were again withdrawn to the West side of the canal.

It should be noted that during the day a regiment of British twenty-five pounders moved into position near squadron headquarters, lending excellent support. The role of artillery was a major one on both sides throughout the entire action.

During the same night, Troop C reorganized and sent one full T/O platoon to protect the right South flank of the 48th, which was astride the Asten Meijel road. The remainder of the troop, supported by the surviving tanks of Company F, protected the left North flank. In the morning, a considerable gap existed between this flank and the right South flank of Troop D, but by noon the tanks had swung North and contacted the adjoining troop, thus forming a continuous line which was held until relieving units took over. Troop D was able to establish a forward OP from which artillery could be adjusted, and six Tigers were seen to burn. Typhoons were also requested, but when the planes arrived, they accidentally strafed and rocketted the 1st platoon of Troop C, which narrowly escaped casualties. Troop D was

S-E-C-R-E-T

pulled out of the line at 2030; Troop C remained in its positions on either flank of the 48th until after midnight, when relief arrived.

Troops A and B maintained their positions without further support, despite considerable enemy activity; they were not relieved with the Squadron, but continued their missions under CCA.

When relief of the squadron (less Troops A and B) was complete, Squadron Headquarters moved to an assembly area just West of Maarheeze beginning the march at 0300 and closing in bivouac with Trains, Troops C and D, and Company F at 0600. It was hoped that there would be time for maintenance, rest, and reorganization, but at 2300 the same night the Squadron was again alerted for movement.

Still under CCR control, the Squadron moved out at 0300 on the 31st, with the mission of outposting Nederweert and a portion of the adjoining canal. The zone was divided, with Troop C responsible for the Northern portion and Troop D the South; an attached company from the 203rd, Anti-aircraft Artillery Battalion was divided between them, as was the tank company. Each established four strong points of various strengths, and a Squadron reserve was maintained to reinforce any of these units if need be.

Squadron CP was set up in Nederweert at 0600, and soon after daylight all strong points reported in position. Later in the day, Troop B was released to Squadron control, and the troop less one platoon was called to the Reserve. One platoon was used for local security in the town of Nederweert.

During the day, the town was shelled by enemy artillery, but the CP remained in the City Hall opposite the Church. At 1730, Company C, 23rd AIB moved in and reinforced the strong points for the night. Though the enemy continued to shell the town intermittently through the night, no attack came.

For the Squadron Commander:

(signed)
ARTHUR R. SLADE
Captain, Cavalry
Unit Historian

S E C R E T

HEADQUARTERS
87TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON MECHANIZED
A.P.O. #257, U.S. ARMY

2 December 1944

SUBJECT: After Action Report, Month of November, 1944

To : The Adjutant General, Washington 25, D. C. (Through Channels)

1 Nov 44

As of 0001, 1 November 1944, the 87th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized (less Troop A, Attached to CCA), was attached to CCR in the vicinity of Nederweert, Holland. At nightfall the previous evening, the Squadron (-) had been reinforced by Company B, 23rd Armored Infantry Battalion, and with attachments occupied positions as shown on the attached overlay (page 2). The morning was misty, visibility poor. By 0830, the mist had thinned enough so that the reinforcing infantry was released, all elements leaving the line by ten o'clock. At 1407, Troop C reported that civilians in that area were moving back, under orders from the Germans to clear the area for three kilometers back from the canal. About an hour later, mortar shells began to land in the Troop C area, at 1527 artillery concentrations hit the Reserve Area and smoke shells landed in front of Rest and Diddle. However, no attack came. The CP in Nederweert was shelled intermittently all day. Promptly at 1630, Company C, 23 AIB arrived at the road junction one-quarter mile West of the church, and by 1800 had been guided into the positions occupied by B/23 during the previous night. There was evidence of considerable enemy activity across the canal, and during the night both Troop C and Troop D called for several artillery concentrations on points where fire or noise betrayed enemy positions.

2 Nov 44

At 0800 relief of the Squadron by the 23rd AIB began, continuing until 1143, when the last elements of Troop C were relieved. Squadron Headquarters remained in Neederweert¹² until about 1300, and upon release by CCR moved to a bivouac area just East of Maarheeze, closing in at 1417. Vehicles were serviced, and that same night a new mission was received. The Squadron was to secure and outpost the Canal Du Nord progressively as CCA cleared the area North of that canal, Troop A to take the first sector cleared, and to revert to Squadron control upon reporting in position.

3 Nov 44

At 0700, the 87th reverted to Division Control. At 0800 Squadron (-) moved from bivouac to Maarheeze to an assembly area Southeast of Zommeren (606106), where the troops remained alert awaiting movement orders for the new mission. The decision to move

S E C R E T

- 1 -

¹² Nederweert

S E C R E T

[MAP showing the following positions]

[A/87]
[TIRED]
[DIDDLE]
[REST]
[WILLING]
[RECOUP]
[JOY]
[FREEDOM]
[WEARY]

SITUATION IN CCR SECTOR

as of 31 Oct. 1944

MAP-1/100,000
SHEET 5

LEGEND CCR

TIRED
Rcn Sec
DIDDLE
1/B/23
Rcn Sec
2 Lt Tks
REST
Rcn Sec
1 Rifle Sqd) -2/B/23
1 MG Sqd)

WILLING
2/B/23 (- Dets)
Rcn Sec
2 Lt Tks
1 AG
RECOUP
AA Sec
Rcn Sec
1 Rifle Sqd- 3/B/23

JOY
Rcn Sec
AA Sec
1 AG
3/B/23 (-Dets)

FREEDOM
Rcn Plat
AA Sec
81mm Sqd -3/B/23

CCR RES
A.C.
3 Tks
AG
A.C. Sec
Amb
AA Sec

S E C R E T

S E C R E T

was not made until 1631, when Squadron (-) moved to the new area. Troop A was already in position, and under cover of darkness Troops B and D moved in so that the three troops occupied the line Budschop--Waatskamp. The Squadron CP was established in Ospel, with Troop C and Company F in reserve.

4 Nov 44

During the night there was occasional mortar-fire in vicinity Squadron CP, and as soon as it was light, Troop D reported many mines in their area. Anti-personnel mines were found strewn along the shoulders of roads and trails, and in many of the fields. Some AT mines were also discovered, most of them having been removed by the Engineers. At 1035, Troop C was given the mission to take over, secure, and outpost ground taken by Task Force BROWN, and at 1145 Troop A reverted to Squadron reserve and moved to vicinity of Squadron CP. Then at 1230 Squadron was again attached to CCR.

At 1330 Troop B reported trouble with mines and requested engineers to clear area. Later, at 1410, the same troop reported one killed, two wounded and one quarter-ton destroyed by mines. As more reports of mines came in, a warning was broadcast to all troops to warn their men that in all areas where AT mines were found, AP mines should also be expected.

By 1430 Troop C was in position, but not quite abreast of the other troops, as the infantry had not finished clearing the area along the canal. Later in the evening, however, Troop C moved into position on the left flank of troop D. This was completed by 2025.

During the evening, listening posts reported amber flares, sounds of track vehicles, and at 2100 Troop D reported that a 6-man enemy patrol crossed the canal at the blown bridge 629099. The troop outpost there opened fire, killing or wounding two, and driving the rest back. The remainder of the night was quiet except for occasional shelling.

5 Nov 44

Little activity during the morning. There was occasional enemy mortar-fire, and forward observers placed artillery on suspected enemy positions. At 1100, one platoon of TD's was attached to Squadron and held in mobile reserve after reconnaissance in Squadron Zone. At 1345 Troop D reported assigned area checked and cleared of mines. One platoon of 105mm assault guns from the 17th Tank Battalion was attached to the Squadron, and one gun attached to each troop for direct support.

At nightfall listening posts were again established along the canal, but the night passed quietly excepting for one five-man enemy patrol which approached Troop D's position, exchanged fire, and was driven back. One Troop D man was wounded.

S E C R E T
- 3 -

S E C R E T

6 Nov 44

Little activity. At about 1930 the enemy set fire to a house south of the canal by firing a machine gun into it. Rapid combustion indicated that the house had been prepared for burning. At about the same time, a Troop A quarter-ton hit an AT mine at 643005. Listening posts reported one flare shortly after midnight, and some vehicular movement was heard; otherwise no activity was reported during the night.

7 Nov 44

At 0958 Troop C reported contact with Company A, 48th Armored Infantry Battalion, and at noon the Engineers arrived to clear the Troop C area. Intermittent enemy mortar and artillery fire continued through the day, while numerous officers from the 112th British Brigade visited the CP to arrange relief. While relieving units were moving into position, enemy patrols were active in the Troop A and Troop B sectors. All troops reported the British in position by 0400 (8 Nov 44).

8 Nov 44

At 0715, the first elements of Troop C moved out to temporary assembly area South of Maarheeze, squadron closing in at 1145. While in this area, movement orders were prepared for the march to Margraten, Holland.

9 Nov 44

At 0900 Squadron moved out on the march to Margraten. As the column moved South, the beating rain changed to snow. All troops had closed in their respective areas by 1418, and vehicles were completely serviced by 1628. Squadron CP was set up in the town of Margraten.

10 Nov 44 to 21 Nov 44 (inclusive)

The entire day of 10 November 1944 was set aside for maintenance of men, equipment and vehicles, a perimeter defense was set up tying in with CCB and CCR and in compliance with Division Order the following day was designated as a day of rest for the troops. During the remainder of this period in Margraten, training and maintenance were carried on, showers and laundry provided, and for recreation there were movies and passes to Maastricht¹³. On the 21st the Squadron was alerted for movement to a new assembly area.

22 Nov 44

At 1130 the head of the Squadron column moved out on the march to the new assembly area just Northeast of Heerlan¹⁴. Troops D and B continued directly to the assembly areas of CCA and CCB respectively, both troops being attached to combat commands effective upon arrival in the new area. The remainder of the squadron closed in the Squadron Assembly Area at 1615, with Squadron Headquarters, Headquarters

S E C R E T
- 4 -

¹³ Maastricht

¹⁴ Heerlen

S E C R E T

and Service Troop, and Company F in Palembang¹⁵, and Troop C in Kakert¹⁶, and Troop A in Nieuwenhagen¹⁷.

23 Nov 44 to 30 Nov 44, Inclusive

The new area included excellent terrain for range work and small unit problems, and throughout the remainder of the month full advantage was taken of this opportunity to train replacements in their new jobs, and to further train the old men. Maintenance was continued, and the problem of resupply pushed toward completion. At the same time, the staff studied the terrain and enemy information in an assigned sector, and worked on plans for a probable future operation.

(signed)
VINCENT L. BOYLAN
Lieutenant Colonel, Cavalry
Commanding

S E C R E T
- 5 -

¹⁵ Palenberg, Germany

¹⁶ C/87 Morning Reports gave "Karket, Holland VK7858" on 22 Nov - 8 Dec, inclusive. This was amended in the 9 Dec Morning Report to "Schaesberg, Holland VK7858" with the text: "Station since 22 Nov 44 should have read: Schaesberg, Holland."

¹⁷ Nieuwenhagen, Holland

S E C R E T

HEADQUARTERS
87TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON MECHANIZED
A.P.O. #257, U.S. ARMY
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

ARS/ejm

8 January 1945.

SUBJECT: After Action Report, Month of December, 1944

To : The Adjutant General, Washington 25, D. C.
(Through Channels)

From 1 December to 15 December 1944, Troop D was attached to CCA and Troop B to CCB. Squadron CP, Headquarters and Service Troop and Company F were located at Palemig, Holland, with Troop C at Kakert and Troop A in Nieuenhagen. The Squadron Commander and his staff were studying the Division plan for crossing of Ruhr River, and troops were carrying on maintenance and training. Special emphasis was placed on use of mortars and other weapons, beginning with individual and crew training, and culminating in platoon combat firing problems.

15 December 1944 at 1000, Troop B returned to Squadron control, and at 1800 closed in bivouac near Squadron Headquarters in the outskirts of Heerlen. It was understood that Troop D would also be returned, but at 1645 on the 16th an order was received to cease all movement, and be on a one-hour alert for movement after 0800 next morning. At about 2000 the evening of the 16th the Squadron was ordered to be prepared for movement South any time after 2400. No further details were known until the liaison officer arrived with march order, which called for crossing the IP

S E C R E T

at Kunrade at 0330, and marching to Vielsalm, Belgium. A billeting officer was sent ahead, and with the time for crossing the IP pushed back one hour, the squadron crossed and cleared promptly, marching under radio silence.

At Vielsalm the billeting officer designated an assembly area to the East, including Puteau¹⁸ and Recht, and the latter was selected for a temporary CP. The head of the Squadron column arrived there at 1030 on the morning of the 17th, and by 1200 the CP was set up. Troop B had pushed on through to the East, Troop C blocked approaches from the North, and Troops A and D were held in readiness along the road to the West. Radio nets were opened, and orders received for the Commanding Officer to report to Headquarters CCB at St. Vith for orders. In the absence of Lieutenant Colonel BOYLAN who was then on leave, the Executive Officer, Major CANNON, reported to the Commanding General, and was notified that the Squadron less Troop B was attached to CCB, and that Troop B was detached from the Squadron and placed directly under CCB control. Squadron (-) was ordered to form a screen from the Schoenbrug¹⁹ road up to the Heppenbach road, pushing well out so as to include Meyerode, Herresbach, and Heuem. The plan put out to the Troop Commanders at Recht called for the three Reconnaissance troops in line with the Tank Company in reserve. Company F was then sent to Medell to reconnoitre and outpost the town for use as Squadron CP, but found the town already occupied by the enemy. Consequently the Squadron CP was set up in a field one mile West of St. Vith, Company F furnishing security. Troops A and D pushed out to occupy their assigned zones, but were held up by friendly traffic. Troop

- 2 -

¹⁸ Poteau, Belgium

¹⁹ Schoenberg, Belgium

S E C R E T

C was diverted to the North to counter a tank threat, and occupied the ridge-line running generally East from Hunningen, then South with a roadblock on the Heppenbach road. The Troop tied in with the 38th Infantry at this point, and Troop A which had pushed on ahead and discovered that the enemy was in Wallerode withdrew behind this roadblock at about one o'clock next morning.

At approximately 0300 an order was received to attach one troop to each combat command, and Troops A and D were attached to CCR and CCA respectively. However, since it was impossible for Troop A to reach CCR's position, the Commanding General, CCB, later obtained permission to continue using Troop A in his sector.²⁰

At dawn, 40 or 50 German infantrymen attacked the 3rd platoon of Troop C, on the ridge East of Hunningen. A firefight ensued, and the enemy was reinforced by more infantry supported by tanks. The 3rd platoon fell back on Hunningen, and as the enemy pushed on to the crossroads, Sergeant Norbert H. Zimmerman took part of the 1st platoon and set up on the high ground 300 yards Southwest of the town, while the remainder of the platoon with the Troop Headquarters and 3rd platoon retired about 400 yards along the road to St. Vith, and set up a defensive position behind buildings along the road. Later these elements fell back about 300 yards farther and established a line on high ground astride the road.

From the high ground near Hunningen, enemy tanks threatened the Squadron CP to the South of them, and the CP moved West to a point just short of Rodt, where word was received that the enemy was in Recht and Puteau, having thus cut the road to Vielsalm.

At 1000 the Troop C line was reinforced by a platoon of light

²⁰ Some maps show A/87's position as if this move had been made. However these maps were premature in placing A/87, as this text indicates.

S E C R E T

tanks from Company F, commanded by Lieutenant GOOD, and at 1100 a company of mediums from the 31st arrived. These tanks drove back the enemy tanks, and when a company of Tank Destroyers arrived about noon, the mediums left to undertake a new mission East of St. Vith.

Shortly after noon, Lieutenant Colonel BOYLAN arrived at the Squadron CP and resumed command of the Squadron. He was ordered to coordinate with Lieutenant Colonel ERLENBUSCH in organizing the defense of the North flank.

The Tank Destroyers which arrived to support Troop C had the mission of retaking the high ground around Hunninger²¹, and after a coordinated attack Troop C reestablished the old line through Hunninger with Tank Destroyers in support. Four 40mm Anti-tank guns were also moved up in support, plus a 105mm Self-propelled howitzer and a platoon from the 23rd Armored Infantry Battalion that happened to be occupying a position nearby. By 1800 however, only C/87 was left, and about this time Company C 31st Tank Battalion arrived and moved in on the left (West) flank.

Meanwhile, Troop A had taken over the position formerly occupied by the 2nd platoon of Troop C, and Troop D had moved out to the vicinity of Thommen to join CCA. A change of orders placed Troop D directly under Division control, and Lieutenant OLSON went to Division Headquarters, to be followed by the troop in the morning. This left Troops C and A holding a line along the ridge-line East out of Hunninger and South to the Heppenbach road, tied in with A/38 on their right and C/31 on their left.

The following day, 19 December, the Squadron CP moved to the crossroads one kilometers Southwest of Rodt. 1st Platoon Company F made a road reconnaissance West of Rodt toward Vielsalm, and

²¹ Hunningen, Belgium (referred to as Hunange on French-language maps)

S E C R E T

reported that although there was a trail leading West from Hinterhausen²² to Commanster, the only satisfactory and serviceable road was through Krombach²³. The 2nd platoon Company F set up roadblocks in Ober Emmels, while the 3rd platoon remained in support of Troop C. One platoon from the 814 Tank Destroyer Battalion was also in support of Troop C. (See overlay for 19 December, 1944, Page 6)

During the night considerable vehicular movement was heard. Numerous artillery concentrations were fired on located enemy positions, and enemy vehicles and men threatened the line several times but were driven back by artillery and small arms.

The afternoon of the 20th, A/17 came South from Recht through Ober Emmels, and was placed in position on the left flank of C/31, with Lieutenant WAMSTAD's platoon (2F/87) still out in front, outposting Ober Emmels.

To further extend and protect the left flank, Captain STINE was sent with his Tank company headquarters, one platoon from D/31, and one platoon from C/23. This small force was tied in on the left flank of A/17, which was supported by a platoon plus two squads from C/23 and tied in on the right with five tanks from C/31. Those in turn were tied in with C/87 which was supported by one platoon from F/87 and one platoon 814 Tank Destroyer, and tied in to Troop A. The right flank of Troop A tied in with A/38.

Early in the evening, just toward dusk, enemy activity increased all along the line, with the main attack coming in the Troop C sector. This attack was repulsed with Tank Destroyers, and Troop C reported three enemy tanks knocked out, one probable. In the morning, four enemy tanks (MK IV) were found knocked out. These dispositions remained unchanged through the 21st, and with the aid

²² Hinderhausen, Belgium

²³ Also spelled Crombach, Belgium

S E C R E T

[MAP]

OVERLAY-PERIODIC REPORTS
MAP OF GERMANY-SHEETS 5602
5702
182000 TO 192000 DEC. 44
SCALE 1/25,000

- 6 -

S E C R E T

of excellent artillery support numerous enemy attacks were repulsed.

During the morning of the 21st, a large enemy patrol estimated at 300 men penetrated in the CCA sector, cutting the road between Headquarters CCA and Headquarters 48th Armored Infantry Battalion. Later, dismounted enemy, presumably the same, threatened the 275th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, in Hinterhausen. Lieutenant BARNHILL was sent out with his light tank platoon (3F/87) at dusk, to drive off this enemy force and destroy them if possible. This mission he accomplished, but some enemy escaped and contributed a feeling of insecurity in all the area around Hinterhausen.

Again the enemy was especially active at night, and there were numerous enemy thrusts in the vicinity of Neder Emmels and Ober Emmels. While the 23rd and 38th Armored Infantry Battalions were reorganizing in the triangle Krombach - Hinterhausen - Rodt, the enemy seriously threatened the left flank West of Captain STINE's position. Some enemy even penetrated the lines and established a roadblock 400 yards East of Rodt on the road to St. Vith. However, in the morning the lines appeared to be intact.

Early in the morning, enemy men and vehicles were reported in St. Vith, and around ten o'clock a serious threat developed along the left flank. By 1030 this threat was so serious that the Squadron Commander ordered the CP to move to Krombach. This was done immediately, but not before the enemy had brought the Hinterhausen Road under fire and dismounted enemy troops had closed in to within 200 yards of the CP. Then with all Headquarters personnel firing every available weapon, the Squadron Headquarters

S E C R E T

moved by a back trail generally South then West to Krombach, where another temporary CP was established.

At this time orders were received to form a line North and East of Krombach and Hinterhausen. Troops C and A were detached Squadron control and moved crosscountry to the high ground Southwest of St. Vith under command of Lieutenant Colonel ERLENBUSCH; the remainder of the troops from the left flank fought their way back to Hinterhausen, and set up a defensive position facing North and East, under command of Lieutenant Colonel BOYLAN. Here a task force was organized under command of Captain STINE, consisting of A/17, one company S14 Tank Destroyer (less 1 platoon), the remaining tanks of F/87, and one assault gun from E/87.

At 1843, a radio message from Troop C (which was no longer under Squadron control) warned of an enemy tank moving into Krombach along the railroad tracks. Subsequent reports indicated more tanks and infantry approaching South of the railroad. TD's were placed to counter this threat, and additional guards alerted. Shortly before 2100 the guards reported enemy infantry closing in on the town, and at 2100 the headquarters moved out, setting up in Maldingen at 0045.

At daybreak 23 December, Squadron Headquarters moved from Maldingen to Commanster, withdrawal having been ordered along the route Commanster-Vielsalm. From this point the Squadron Commander pushed out toward Hinterhausen to take personal command of the covering force there. He intercepted the withdrawing covering force midway between Hinterhausen and Commanster, and set up a defensive position to the North and Northeast of Commanster to protect the withdrawal of CCB as per instructions Commanding General CCB. It was there discovered that the medium tank company

S E C R E T

commander had lost control of a platoon of medium tanks and 3 TD's, which had left Hinterhausen, tied on to the main column, and accompanied the withdrawal, thus materially weakening the fighting strength of the force at hand.

The withdrawal from Commanster was accomplished rapidly and in perfect order, Squadron Headquarters falling in on the tail of the CCB column. Upon receipt of notice that all troops had successfully withdrawn from Commanster, the order was given for the covering force to withdraw to the next defensive position.

As the head of the rear guard column reached Commanster, word was received that the main column was held up, and further delaying action would be necessary. A defensive position was immediately set up in Commanster. This position was held against an enemy attack in which two medium tanks and one Tank Destroyer were lost. Orders were then received to continue the withdrawal.

A successful orderly disengagement was effected, and the task force marched in column on Vielsalm. At a point 2.6 miles East of Vielsalm, friendly troops from the 28th Infantry Division were encountered, and the column stopped to ascertain what remained between Vielsalm and Commanster. The Sergeant in charge of the infantrymen stated that his two machine gun squads were all that remained.

Major CANNON then returned, having seen the tail of the main column clear over the bridge into Vielsalm, and in compliance with orders he deployed the taskforce in another defensive position. Meanwhile, Lieutenant Colonel BOYLAN returned to Vielsalm for instructions. Upon arrival, he found that Division Headquarters was still in Vielsalm with nothing between them and the enemy but the small rear guard and two infantry machine gun squads. He radioed orders

S E C R E T

to hold in place, and made a reconnaissance to Salmchateau²⁴, where it was found that the enemy had entered the outskirts of town and knocked out a friendly vehicle with bazooka fire. Accordingly, upon his return to the covering force, Lieutenant Colonel BOYLAN detached one platoon of light tanks and sent them to protect the South flank and to keep the axis of withdrawal open. At the same time, a reconnaissance section under Lieutenant GLORIOSO was sent back East toward Commanster to regain contact. The road led through heavily wooded, hilly country, and all movement was canalized. The section drew fire, returned it, and was forced back, withdrawing through the defensive position. Numerous artillery concentrations were fired to hold off the advancing enemy, one concentration falling on the friendly position and causing four casualties. By 1900, however, this position had become completely untenable, since the enemy was within a mile of Vielsalm on both the North and South. To avoid being cut off by these enemy forces, the task force withdrew to a defensive position in the outskirts of Vielsalm, where orders were received to withdraw to the assigned area. A reconnaissance was made North and South of the bridge, but no friendly troops remained, the infantry having withdrawn. The withdrawal was then effected, the task force commander remaining on the East side of the bridge and counting the vehicles as they crossed. When his own vehicle crossed at 1925, the force commander reported to the 82nd Airborne Division engineers at the bridge that the last friendly vehicle had crossed.

Meanwhile, the remnants of the Squadron had assembled in the assigned area at Jevigne, moved from there to join Squadron Trains 4 miles South of Harze, and from there moved to the new assembly area vicinity Xignesse²⁵, closing in at 2200. There they were later

- 10 -

²⁴ Salm-Château, Belgium

²⁵ Xhignesse, Belgium

S E C R E T

joined by the Squadron Commander and Executive Officer, with those elements of the squadron which had been a part of the covering force, plus supply and medical crews which had been sent out to support that force.

It should be noted that the weather was a strong factor in the successful withdrawal of our forces. A quick freeze during the night 22 - 23 December had made the road from Hinderhausen to Commanster capable of holding Division load. A sudden thaw could have had disastrous results.

The morning of the 24th, Lieutenant Colonel DAMON of the 14th Cavalry Group arrived with orders that elements of his group (which included the 18th and 32nd Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadrons) were to be used by Lieutenant Colonel BOYLAN in a temporary reorganization of the 87th. Provisional Troop A was immediately incorporated in place of B/87, while Troops A and B of the 87th were combined to bring Troop A up to fighting strength in men and vehicles, and Troops C and D were combined to make a reorganized Troop C. At 1352 the Squadron moved out to outpost the CCB Zone to the Southwest along the line Manhay, Grandmenils²⁶, Erezee, Barvaux. This line was occupied as ordered with Troop C on the East, Troop A in the center, and B to the West. Squadron CP was established at La Beole.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Colonel DAMON concentrated his troops in Xignesse and undertook to organize two T/O rcn troops to replace Troops B and D of the 87th. He sent a light tank company and one rcn troop that same night, and the following evening another rcn troop, almost complete, arrived. On 26 December the reorganization was completed as follows:

- 11 -

²⁶ Grandmenil, Belgium

S E C R E T

<u>ORIGINAL UNIT</u>	<u>NEW UNIT</u>	<u>COMMANDING OFFICER</u>
Trs A & B/87	Tr A	Captain WELLS
Tr C/32	Tr B	Captain MARTIN
Trs C & D/87	Tr C	Captain JOHNSON
Tr B/32	Tr D	Captain LINDSEY
Tr E/87	Tr E	Lieutenant WILLOUGHBY
Co F/18 & F/87	Co F	Captain STINE

At 1600, per VOGC CCB, Troop D plus 1 platoon Company F was attached to the 38 Armored Infantry Battalion, and Troop B plus 1 platoon Company F was attached to the 424th Infantry Regiment. The remainder of the Squadron continued outpostting the CCB zone to the Southwest.

This situation generally remained the same for four days, until the night of 29 - 30 December, when the Division was relieved and ordered to move to a new assembly area. At 0530 the Squadron column crossed its IP and moved by way of Bomal to Xoris²⁷. Finding the Squadron Headquarters area filled with Corps and Army troops, permission was obtained to place the Squadron CP in the CCA area at Comblain-la-Tour. All men and vehicles from the 14th Cavalry Group reverted to their own unit control and proceeded directly to their own assembly area in the vicinity of Oneux. Troop A (A & B) was billeted in Pierreux, Troop C (C & D) in Xoris, and the following day the attached assault gun platoons reverted to Troop control and closed in the Troop E assembly area at Comblinay.

At the close of the month, the Squadron was perfecting the organization of two full-strength reconnaissance troops with assault gun attachments. The Tank Company was reduced to six tanks, during this reorganization, emphasis was placed on maintenance and supply problems, with the objective of regaining combat efficiency without delay.

(signed)
VINCENT L. BOYLAN
Lieutenant Colonel, Cavalry,
Commanding

²⁷ Xhoris, Belgium

S E C R E T

HEADQUARTERS
87TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON MECHANIZED
A.P.O. #257, U.S. ARMY
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

ARS/pjs

SUBJECT: After Action Report, Month of January, 1945.

To : The Adjutant General, Washington, 25, D. C.
(Through Channels)

At the beginning of the month the Squadron CP was in Comblain-la-tour, Belgium, with Troop C and D, and Company F in Xhoris, Troops A and B at the road junction just North of Xhoris, and Troop E in Comblinay. The next day, one platoon from Company F was detached and placed on Detached Service with Division Headquarters, taking five tanks. The remainder of the company with the one remaining tank then moved to Comblain-la-tour, where they furnished security for Squadron Headquarters.

Troops B and D and Company F had emerged from the St. Vith action far below strength in both men and vehicles. Therefore, during the first ten days in January emphasis was on reorganization, maintenance, and resupply. Several old men returned to duty, including experienced non-commissioned officers and one officer. Each day the unit regained more of it's combat efficiency.

As more and more snow fell, chains were put on all vehicles and experiments were conducted with winter camouflage for vehicles. Then, 11 January 1945, all radios were silenced, and on 12 January the Squadron moved to a new assembly area with the CP located at Oneux, Belgium. The assault gun platoons were attached to the troops and moved with them. The area was crowded and the troops were scattered out with A in Spa, C in Sassor, B and D in Theux, and headquarters and service about four miles west of Theux.

The Squadron was attached to CCR for the forthcoming operation, an attack to retake St. Vith. The Squadron mission was to reconnoitre to the South and East after the town was taken, but the attack went much more slowly than expected. By the time the order came to move from this assembly area, Troops A, C, and D were sufficiently reinforced and re-equipped to operate as normal reconnaissance troops.

On 20 January, 1945, radio silence was lifted and the Squadron moved on order Commanding Officer CCR to Cockphange. Heavy snow blocked secondary roads, and made it necessary to go by the MSR through Spa. All troops had closed in the new assembly area by noon.

The following day brought another move. This time Headquarters and Service Troop and Trains remained in place, while the Squadron Headquarters and Company F moved to Waimes, Troops A, C and D to Bruyeres, and troop B to Walk.

- 1 -

S E C R E T

S E C R E T

Next morning, 22 January, 1945 the Squadron was given the mission of setting up a secondary defensive line running generally northeast-southwest, outposting Ilverdingen and Monteneau²⁸ to the southeast, in support of the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment. Headquarters and Troop A moved to Monteneau, C and D to Ilverdingen, B remained in Walk, and Trains moved to Xhoffraix. Troops C and A prepared defensive positions southeast of the towns, while Troop D reconnoitered the high ground around Monteneau for artillery OP's and firing positions. All three troops were preparing plans for dismounted employment against the town of St. Vith.

On the morning of the 23rd, the Squadron remained prepared to support the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, but was also alerted to move to an assembly area in the vicinity of Hunningen and execute a dismounted attack against St. Vith on order Commanding Officer CCR. Company A, 40th Tank Battalion, was attached, and the company commander briefed. Then at 1030 this alert was lifted, the plan changed, and at 1200 the order was received to move to a new assembly area at Nieder Emmelser Heide. A/40 was released, and B/40 and D/40 attached. The Squadron column moved out at 1300 and closed at 1530, the attached tank companies joining the squadron at the new assembly area. Troop B and Trains did not move.

Considerable enemy artillery fell in the assembly area, but there were few casualties. Then, that same night, Troops A and C were given missions to reconnoiter out from St. Vith to the east and south respectively. The town had been reduced to a heap of rubble by bombs and shells, and amounted to a huge roadblock rather than a communications center. The patrols proceeded through town dismounted, and a patrol from Troop C, led by Lieutenant JOHN H. MULLIKEN, JR., penetrated southeast to about 860867 from which point they heard German conversation and motor sounds to the East. These patrols were recalled at midnight.

On the 24th, Troop C had the mission of making a reconnaissance in force of the high ground north of Galhausen and Neidinger²⁹, this high ground being the Division objective for the 25th. At 1145 the troop moved out from the assembly area to a dismount point just north of St. Vith, where one man was killed by a hedgerow booby trap. The troop marched through town single file, with the 3rd Platoon in the lead, followed by the 1st and 2nd. Troop A moved up to a dismount point behind them, prepared to support.

The Troop C column worked its way along the road directly South out of St. Vith to the railroad, then since one of the bridges was blown, detoured West to a place where the railroad cut presented a less difficult obstacle to cross. The point, consisting of Lt. MULLIKEN, one radio man, one BAR man, and one rifleman, had pushed beyond the high ground at 853869 and was in plain sight of the objective when the enemy opened flanking fire with machine guns and rifles from houses and fox-holes along the road to the West. The 3rd and 1st Platoons opened fire with machine guns and rifles, killed three, wounded three, and captured eleven. The remainder escaped south along the road.

After observing for some time the enemy on the objective in front of them, the point opened fire to further test the enemy strength (estimated at from 25 to 40 infantrymen, and from two to five tanks or SP guns). The enemy replied with machine guns and 20mm, and mortar, nebelwerfer, and light artillery began to come in from the east. The point fell back a little, but the high ground was held.

- 2 -

S E C R E T

²⁸ Iveldingen and Montnau, Belgium

²⁹ Neidinger, Belgium

S E C R E T

Later the 509th PIB was supposed to pass through this position and attack. They were guided through, and the troop dug in to hold the high ground at 853869 with reserves along the railroad. The men had no blankets, and had to be rotated, giving them a chance to warm up in a cellar back of the railroad tracks. Total casualties so far were one killed³⁰ (booby trap) and eight wounded by artillery fire.

Meanwhile, Troop D had been attached to CCB at 1400, and Troop A had come under direct control of CCR at 2100. Troop B moved to the vicinity of Am Kreuz³¹ under CCR control, and Squadron Trains moved to Waimes.

25 January 1945 at 1325, Troop C passed to tactical control of Task Force Erlenbusch, with orders to attack south at 1430 and seize the high ground facing them. The attack was postponed one hour and then jumped off with planned artillery fires on the objective.

Troop C had three platoons abreast, all west of the St. Vith-Galhausen road, and the 509th PIB was proceeding directly down that road on their left. As the attack moved forward, the 2nd and 3rd platoons were taken under fire by friendly tanks west of St. Vith (using HE and Coaxial machine guns), and from the high ground to the east the enemy laid mortar and artillery on them in the open fields in front of the objectives. The 1st and 3rd platoons, followed by the 509th, pushed through this friendly and enemy fire, placing marching fire on the objective all the way. The objective was also smoked.

Upon reaching the high ground the friendly artillery lifted, the 509th fanned out to the left, and the enemy fled. The 1st and 3rd platoons pursued the enemy, overran the objective, and had to be called back.

The 2nd Platoon was delayed by the intense friendly fire, but later pushed down to the woods South of Mailust. The 1st and 3rd Platoons established a line along the high ground from 852864 to 853863, where they tied in with the 509th. This line was held until relieved on the 27th.

The men had one blanket the first night, and two the second, but about 15 had to be evacuated for frostbite and trenchfoot. The spirit of these men was splendid. They stuck in the line, and even when foot inspections revealed frostbite it took a direct order to get them out.

Also noteworthy was the manner in which pack trains were organized by Lieutenant FRED A. LEWELLAN and Sgt. John R. Lubin, using practically all the men not actually in the line, including vehicle guards, maintenance men, cooks and supply personnel, to carry supplies up to the men in the line. Drinking water presented a difficult problem because it froze in the canteens and water cans, and the meat or eggs in the K rations froze hard. Observed enemy artillery fire from the East made it necessary for supplies to move under cover of darkness or by a defiladed route through deep snow. Despite these difficulties the functions of supply and evacuation were carried out.

- 3 -

S E C R E T

³⁰ The identity of this man is not yet known, since we do not yet have all of the January 1945 Morning Reports.

³¹ Am Kreuz, Belgium

S E C R E T

At about 0300 on the 26th, the Squadron Commander returned from Division Headquarters with a special mission. Troop A returned to Squadron control in the vicinity of Monteneau, and the Troop Commander, Captain ROLLAND R. SMITH with the troop executive officer, Lieutenant LEE A. MESTAS were ordered to report to the Squadron CP immediately. A staff meeting was held with these two officers to plan the operation, which was to consist of three fifteen-man dismounted patrols pushing out from Meyerode to the east. Objectives were designated as shown on sketch, and patrols A,B, and C were to reconnoiter to Oak, Pine and Birch respectively awaiting orders there before pushing on to Maple, Poplar, and Elm. It was anticipated that these patrols would remain behind the enemy lines two nights, maintaining contact by radio and reporting all enemy activity observed.

In the morning Troop A organized to transport patrols from Monteneau with minimum transportation. A route was reconnoitered, and at 1145 the column left Monteneau using armored cars with extra men riding on the outside. The road into Meyerode was exposed, and the enemy brought down accurate observed fire from mortars and artillery and direct fire from at least one piece (believed to be an SP gun), killing one man and wounding another.³² Arriving in Meyerode at 1330, the vehicles were dispersed and the patrols reorganized. Each patrol had one radio SCR 300, and most of the men had snowsuits.

Patrol A, led by Lieutenant VINCENT L. HEINTZELMAN, set out at 1400, following the road to the northwest from town for a distance of approximately 600 yards, then turning northeast across the open snow toward the woods. Patrol B, led by Lieutenant EDWARD C. GITS, left fifteen minutes later and followed the northeast road to the edge of town where the infantry had one heavy machine gun. Beyond this point the road and area around it was freshly shell-pocked, and the infantry stated that it was under direct observation. Noticing the hill on the left, it was decided to use it as a screen, and the patrol went back and found another road on the other (north) side of the crest, screened from the woods to the south. This sunken road with thick hedgerows afforded cover and concealment to the top of the hill, and there at the crossroads Patrol B met Patrol A. The two patrols exchanged information, and Patrol A continued directly toward the woods to the northeast while Patrol B sent two scouts down the trail to the southeast to observe the woods in that direction. They saw two Germans follow the same trail into the woods, and reported back in time to notify the last man in Lieutenant HEINTZELMAN'S patrol. Remaining in observation, a total of fourteen enemy were seen in the edge of the woods, and one machine gun was spotted where the trail entered the woods at 905937.

About this time, Patrol C, commanded by Lieutenant ROBERT F. McGONIGAL,³³ arrived by the same route. After an exchange of information, both patrols remained in observation and saw two enemy patrols (one of four or five men, the other six) apparently following Patrol A into the woods. Efforts were made to warn Lieutenant HEINTZELMAN by radio, but without success. Meanwhile Patrol A had pushed into the wood, crossing a well-beaten trail

- 4 -

S E C R E T

³² T/5 Wildon R. Bailey was killed. T/5 Leonard T. Hawkins was lightly wounded in action and transferred to the 96th Evacuation Hospital. In addition, Pvt. Homer W. Woody was lightly injured in action and transferred to the 45th Evacuation Hospital.

³³ The correct spelling is McGONIGLE.

S E C R E T

which ran along the edge. The woods were so dense that radio contact was lost almost immediately after entering, and the patrol pushed on to Oak, arriving after dark. There they put a long antenna on the radio, but although contact was established communication was impossible, the signals being unreadable both ways. The snow in the woods was unbroken, there was no sign of enemy in the area, and no observation from that point, so the patrol proceeded back by a different route attempting to establish communications and get orders. Communication could not be re-established until after the enemy trail along the woods had been re-crossed. Permission was then received to return to the Troop CP in Meyerode, where the patrol arrived at about 0300.

Patrols B and C had remained in observation until dark, observing enemy activity for 180 degrees from the town of Ades B (895945) around the perimeter of the woods where the enemy machine gun was located. Friendly artillery dropped in all around their OP, but no casualties were suffered. At dark, the patrols returned to the Troop CP, reported what they had seen, and after warming up for a half hour started out again.

This time, on the advice of the C.O. 3rd Battalion 424th Infantry Regiment, the patrol took a trail leading directly east from the south part of Meyerode (see overlay attached). As the trail appeared to have been used by the enemy, it appeared wiser to turn off before the trail entered the woods. A small path was discovered leading southeast into the woods, and since the pines at this point were too thick to penetrate the patrol followed this path for about 500 yards, where the path disappeared. The snow on the path was drifted thigh deep, and was unbroken. Nobody had been through it since the snowfall. The path followed along the north path of a stream, and when it faded out the patrol climbed east up the hill into the woods, then turned south to the edge of the clearing. There was a full moon, but the patrol was concealed in the trees. Then someone betrayed their position by coughing, and two machine guns - a MG42 and a caliber .30 light - opened up from the south side of the clearing, firing up the trail toward the patrol's position. By this time the men were cold and nearly exhausted from pushing through the deep snow, and the largeness of the patrols made them difficult to control in the presence of the enemy, so they returned by the same route, arriving at the Troop CP at about 0230.

The following morning (27 January 45) at daylight, Patrol A followed the same road followed by Patrols B and C the afternoon before, to the CP at the crossroads approximately 600 yards north of Meyerode. From this point enemy were still sighted between the two villages to the northwest and north, and at the machine-gun position to the southeast. While the second section remained on the hill observing to the north, the first section proceeded cautiously down the trail to within 150 yards of the enemy machine gun. From this point they observed twelve Germans walking around the machine gun position without arms. One had a cane, only two had snow suits. Apparently they had a shelter back in the woods, for they changed reliefs on the machine gun, the reliefs coming

- 5 -

S E C R E T

S E C R E T

and going by the trail into the woods. Every half-hour a single round of friendly artillery passed over the patrol and landed near the enemy position, then at about noon ten rounds came in - two landing on the enemy position, and eight around the patrol. Soon after, the patrol assembled and returned to the CP by the same route.

The same morning, Patrols B and C started out to the West of Meyerode, and then swung south. Just east of Medell they ran into active fighting, and were unable to get through unobserved. (Friendly troops said the enemy had just launched a small counterattack.) On the way back they again swung west of the Medell-Meyerode road which was still under enemy observation and fire. As they came around the hill they received enemy artillery fire at 893932 and suffered four casualties - two serious, two light. They reached town shortly after noon.

The plan for the evening of the 27th called for all three patrols to proceed to Oak, from which point Patrol A was to reconnoiter through Maple, Poplar, and Elm, Patrol B south between Maple and Oak, and Patrol C through Pine, Birch and Spruce. All patrols were to return by 280030.

At 1745 Patrol A started out to the North. About 200 yards from the CO they met three Germans without arms, one of them waving a white flag. These were brought back to the CP, and upon questioning turned out to be from the 404th Volksgrenadier Division. They said that at the point where the patrols had previously located one enemy machine gun there were in fact three, each manned by three men.

The patrol then set out again and proceeded to the crossroads OP north of town, where a radio relay station was established. The moon was full but there were some clouds, and while the moon was hidden the patrol followed its own old tracks across the snow toward Oak, followed by Patrols B and C. As they crossed the enemy trail at the edge of the woods they came under friendly artillery fire, but they pushed on through. 300 yards short of Oak, however, a heavier concentration of friendly artillery came in all around and ahead of them. They radioed back through the relay station and drew back out of the artillery fire. Here they were again shelled, and drew back to the relay station, where they radioed for orders. Instructions were to remain there and direct fire on the enemy machine guns at 905937, which they did. However, they could get only twelve rounds, of which about ten were in the target area. More was requested but refused. (Next day about fifty dead Germans were found around this spot.)

The patrols then turned back, arriving at the Troop CP at 280020. At noon they left Meyerode to return to the troop assembly area at Monteneau.

When Troop D was first attached to CCB they had been given the mission of holding St. Vith from the East, but later they were shifted south to relieve the 509th PIB on the east flank of Troop C. Both troops were released on the evening of the 27th, and on the morning of the 28th Squadron moved out on the march to the new assembly area. Head of column crossed the IP (Ligneuville) at 1100 and marched to the vicinity of Limbourg, Belgium, closing

- 6 -

S E C R E T

S E C R E T

in at 1811. The Squadron CP, Headquarters and Service Troop, and Troop A were located in Bilstain, Troops B and C in Limbourg, Troop C in Chemins, Troop D in Houyeux, and Company F in Houtem.

The remainder of the month was spent on maintenance, reorganization, and resupply.

(signed)
VINCENT L. BOYLAN
Lt. Colonel, Cavalry,
Commanding.

- 7 -

S E C R E T

[MAP, in color, showing routes of Patrols A, B and C on 26 Jan 45]

S E C R E T

HEADQUARTERS
87TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON MECHANIZED
A.P.O. #257, U.S. ARMY
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

VLB/pjs

SUBJECT: After Action Report, Month of February, 1945.

To : The Adjutant General, Washington, 25, D. C.
(Through Channels)

As of 1 February 1945, the Squadron was in an assembly area in the vicinity of Limburg, Belgium, with Squadron headquarters located in Bilstain. During the first week of the month all troops excepting Troop "A" carried on normal training and maintenance.

Full attendance was required for the film "Germany", and for lectures on "Booby Traps" and "Sex Morality." New weapons were test fired. The reconnaissance troops carried on training in platoon tactics, emphasizing dismounted offensive organization, while Troop "E" and Company "F" were working on gunnery.

Radio procedure training was carried on in the troops, and a Squadron CW Radio School conducted to train selected operators from all troops. Security lectures were given by the Squadron S-2. Meanwhile all FM Radios were realigned on new channels and much work had to be done on vehicles and weapons.

At 2030, 2 February, Troop "A" was attached to CCR on Division order, and at 0330 the next morning moved out to the vicinity of Konzen, Germany. There they dispersed and remained all that day and the following night, moving at 0800 on the morning of the 4th to Bickerath, where they were assigned the mission of relieving outposts east of Steckenborn that night. This mission was later changed, and instead, dismounted patrols combed the area from Steckenborn east to the Roer, with the Troop CP in the eastern edge of Steckenborn. The following day, dismounted patrols performed similar missions south of that town.

On the 6th, during the day dismounted patrols were sent to comb the wooded area west of Schmidt, and during the night hourly mounted patrols patrolled the MSR between Schmidt and Strauch. The 7th and 8th the troop remained at Steckenborn waiting for a mission, moving on the 9th to Simmerath. Here they remained until permission was granted to return to the Squadron area, where the troop closed in at 1400, 13 February. The troop officially returned to squadron control at noon the following day. No casualties were suffered during the period when attached to CCR, and no prisoners taken.

During the second week of February, security lectures were continued, and the reconnaissance troops conducted training in 37 mm gunnery and platoon tactics with the dismounted defensive organization. Company "F" continued gunnery training including

- 1 -

S E C R E T

S E C R E T

test firing on Leopold Range, and added work in convoy procedure and driver instructions. Troop "E" test fired new Howitzers and worked on gunnery, maps, computing range data, etc. Classes in voice procedure were continued, adding Slidex, Signal Security, and the use of the Squadron Map Coordinate Code. The CW radio students were enrolled in the Division Radio School.

On the 11th February the squadron was called on to furnish 500 men to work on roads. This was to continue indefinitely, and naturally interfered with training, especially since it was necessary to continue maintenance of radios, vehicles, and weapons.

On the 12th February, Company "F" received two new light tanks M-24. In anticipation of these tanks, NCO schools were already being conducted two hours per night, and with the arrival of the first tank the night schools were expanded to include other members of the crews.

During the third week in February the work details continued, thus limiting the number of men available for training each day. In the Tank Company the problem was especially acute and as the possible daily rotation was small, it had to be carefully planned to permit training of all personnel in the operation and maintenance of the new tanks (including the 75 mm gun). Night classes were continued.

Seven more new tanks came in on 18 February, and when the last nine were received on the 20th, Company "F" was released from the road detail to conduct full-time training in operation, maintenance, crew drill, gunnery, and service of the piece.

The last week in February Company "F" began by range firing with the Caliber 30 coaxial machine guns, test-fired all new weapons, and then after continued training ended the week with two days of platoon firing problems.

On the 24th, the Squadron work detail was cut to 328 men, who were organized into a provisional work company and moved to the vicinity Walheim, Germany. (915359).

Approximately 20 percent of these men were rotated daily thereafter until 28 February when the detail was released and returned to the Squadron area.

Throughout this month there were pass quotas to the Victor Recreation Center in Eupen, and to Verviers, and movies were provided almost every night either in Squadron Maintenance or in the Workshop Theatre in Limburg. There were also a limited number of passes to Paris and Brussels³⁴. While the work details interfered seriously with training, they did not prevent it entirely, and the morale of the men remained excellent.

(signed)
VINCENT L. BOYLAN
Lt. Col., Cavalry,
Commanding.

- 2 -

S E C R E T

³⁴ Brussels, Belgium

S E C R E T

HEADQUARTERS
87TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON MECHANIZED
A.P.O. #257, U.S. ARMY
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

VLB/ejm

2 April, 1945.

SUBJECT: After Action Report, Month of March, 1945.

To : The Adjutant General, Washington 25, D. C.
(Through Channels)

At the beginning of March the 87th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized was assembled in the vicinity of Limburg, Belgium where they had been conducting training and working on road maintenance. On 3 March 1945 the Squadron less trains crossed the Division IP at Eupen, Belgium, and moved to a forward assembly area in Eicherscheid, Germany, prepared to move out on Division order. For this move Troop E assault gun platoons were attached SOP - 1st Platoon to Troop D, 2nd Platoon to Troop A, 3rd Platoon to Troop B, and 4th Platoon to Troop C. The following day trains moved up to join the rest of the squadron, and on March 6th billeting details were sent forward to reconnoiter an assigned area in the vicinity of Thum and Froitzheim. Then on 7 March the unit moved to the new assembly area, continuing on the 8th to Heimerzheim, where the squadron was attached to CCR, prepared for operations to the East.

During the night orders were received and troop commanders briefed for the next move, to Rottgen, Germany. Troop C was sent as advanced guard for the CCR column, and reached the destination without encountering resistance, while Troop B was assigned the rear guard position and the remainder of the squadron marched in the column. Upon arrival, Troop C was assigned the mission of reconnoitering routes to Bonn and outposting the town of Rottgen to the Northeast and East, while Troop D outposted to the East and Southeast, prepared to establish listening posts on the Rhine. Troop A plus one platoon from Company F was placed in position East of Squadron headquarters with the mission of reconnoitering routes into Bad Godesberg. Troop B and Company F (-) remained in squadron reserve.

At 1000 March 10th the Squadron was relieved from attachment to CCR and moved to Bad Godesberg, prepared to take up defensive positions along the Rhine River. Next day, Troops A, B, and D, took up defensive positions along the West bank of the river, tying in with the 48th Armored Infantry Battalion on the left North flank and with the 38th Armored Infantry Battalion on the right South flank. The 3rd Platoon of Company F was attached to Troop D, while the platoon leaders of the remaining platoons reconnoitered routes to the other troops and selected firing positions there.

- 1 -

S E C R E T

S E C R E T

Company F (-) and Troop C were in squadron reserve, and Troop C likewise reconnoitered routes into the areas of Troops A, B, and D.

While continuing this mission, Troop D next day took over the military control of Muffendorf and Rungsdorf, and Troop C sent one platoon to occupy Heidgen and establish a Traffic Control Point there. Then at 0845 on the 13th the remainder of Troop C followed to Heidgen to garrison the town and establish military control. This mission lasted only one day, and on the 14th Troop C returned to Bad Godesberg, setting up Traffic Control Points there.

The same day, Troop E drew one assault gun from each of the assault gun platoons and set up a four-gun battery in the Fussball-Platz, firing prepared concentrations on the East bank of the Rhine. This was continued for five days, rotating the guns, and using forward observers in OPs along the West bank. During this time nearly one thousand rounds were fired.

17 March the 3rd Platoon of Company F was relieved from attachment to Troop D and returned to Company control. Three days later the 2nd and 3rd platoons of Troop C were attached to CCA and CCB respectively for local security, returning to their troop on the 23rd. After returning to Troop C, the 2d Platoon still maintained a Traffic Control Point in the CCA area until the following day.

24 March 1945, at 2300 the Squadron was relieved from attachment to CCR, returned to Division Control, and moved out to a new assembly area in the vicinity of Bruchhausen, crossing the Rhine at Remagen. All units closed in by 0430 the 25th, and at 0900 Troop A was attached to Division Trains and Troop B to CCR. The remainder of the Squadron then moved to an assembly area in the vicinity of Bonefeld³⁵, remaining there only a short time, and then moving on order from CCB to Krummel by 0430 the following morning.

At 1100 the morning of the 27th, Squadron minus was assigned the mission of taking over Prisoner of War Enclosures from the Combat Commands. Troops C and D moved out on this mission but before the mission could be accomplished orders were received to concentrate the Squadron minus at 350230 for another mission, turning over the prisoners already collected to whomever could be found to accept responsibility for them. From the assigned assembly area near Haiern, one platoon from the tank company was detached to furnish local security for Division headquarters, one platoon from troop C sent to CCB, and the remainder of the squadron pushed on past a contemplated area near Hohensolms to a bivouac area just West of Frohnshausen, where Troop B and the detached platoon of Troop C reverted to squadron control.

Next morning the Squadron minus moved on to Ebsdorf on Division Order, prepared to follow CCB on a designed route (Route "C") to the North. During the day, 28 March, further orders

- 2 -

S E C R E T

³⁵ Bonefeld, Germany

S E C R E T

were received assigning to the Squadron the mission of protecting the Division (and Corps) East flank by following closely behind CCB, establishing and outposting roadblocks at designated points on all the main avenues of approach from that direction. The four Southern roadblocks were assigned to Troop C, the next three to Troop B, and the Northernmost four to Troop D. Accordingly, operations instructions were put out with the order of march Troops C, B, and D, followed by Company F, Squadron Headquarters and Squadron Trains. A liaison officer with CW radio was sent to join the CCB column and radio reports of its progress. As CCB stopped for the night, the Squadron did not move out from Ebsdorf until the morning of the 30th, then proceeding according to plan, with Squadron Headquarters moving up to Haina.

The following morning Squadron Headquarters continued to Lohlbach with Company F, and as Troops C and B were successively relieved by the 99th Infantry Division during the afternoon and evening, they moved up to Hunsdorf and Lohlbach respectively, Squadron Trains being also in Hunsdorf, and Troop D continuing to holding its defensive positions, with the Troop CP in Lohlbach. One platoon of Troop C occupied the town of Huddigen, and one Reconnaissance Section was sent to guard an underground factory and gas dump,

In addition to the continuing defensive mission of Troop D, and maintaining a guard on the German Military Hospital at Haina, the Squadron assumed responsibility for military control of all civilians in the area, and began the work of enforcing regulations, collecting arms, and controlling traffic on the main highways. During the operations from the Rhine to Lohlbach the Squadron cleared rear areas taking a total of 1088 prisoners exclusive of those turned over by other units.

(signed)
VINCENT L. BOYLAN
Lt Colonel, Cavalry,
Commanding.

- 3 -

S E C R E T

S E C R E T

HEADQUARTERS
87TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON MECHANIZED
A.P.O. #257, U.S. ARMY

VLB/ejm

2 May 1945

SUBJECT: After Action Report for the Month of April 1945.

To : The Adjutant General, Washington 25, D. C.
(Through Channels)

The 87th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized on 1 April 1945, remained as at the end of last report, with the Squadron CP in Lohlback, Germany.³⁶ Troop D was continuing the same defensive mission, while the Squadron was responsible for military control of all civilians in the area, and was continuing the work of enforcing civilian control, collecting arms, and controlling traffic on the main highways. Troop A remained attached to Division Trains, and Troop B was prepared to join CCA on Division Order. Troop E detachments SOP: 1/E to Troop D, 2/E to A, 3/E to B, and 4/E to C. 2/F was furnishing security for Division Headquarters.

At 0830, April 2d, Troop B attachment to CCA became effective and the troop moved out to join the Combat Command, which was attached to the 9th Infantry Division and moved out the same evening. Troop C was assigned the mission of taking over the positions vacated by CCA, and reported in position at 0345 the following morning. At 0800, Troop C (+4/E and 1/F) was attached to CCR.

4 April at 0800, Troop C returned to Squadron control, and Squadron less Troops A and B marched to the new Division assembly area, setting up a Squadron CP in Medelon. The mission was to screen the Division Artillery on the Division West flank. The following day Squadron (-) was relieved of the screening mission and moved to a concentration area at Langweise³⁷, prepared to follow the Combat Commands on Division order.

Troop C was placed on a thirty-minute alert after 0700, 6 April, and at 0920 moved to a defensive position on the Division right flank, approximately one mile East of Oberkirchen. At 1250 Troop D followed to the vicinity of Oberkirchen with the mission of clearing the woods from 432845 to 443845, and Squadron headquarters moved up to establish a CP with Troop C. At 1320, Troop A reverted to Squadron control, and at 1500 the Squadron (less Troop B, 3/E, and 2/F) was attached to CCB.

The Troop D mission was accomplished without meeting resistance, and in the morning Troop D with minimum vehicles and supported by F- relieved the 48th Armored Infantry Battalion in Graftschafft. At 1100, Troop B (+3/E) reverted to Squadron control and closed in the vicinity of Almiert³⁸, in Squadron reserve, at 1515 Service Troop, Troop E-, and Trains moved up to join Squadron Headquarters at noon, and in the evening Squadron Headquarters moved to Graftschafft, closing at 2015. Troop C moved to the same place to

- 1 -

³⁶ Lohlbach, Germany

³⁷ Langewiese, Germany

³⁸ Almert, Germany

S E C R E T

replace Troop D and Company F (-) which had pushed on to Schmallengenberg at 1930, reporting in position at 2030.

8 April, Troop C moved North of Gleidorf, and patrolled between Gleidorf and Winkhausen. Squadron CP was set up in Gleidorf. Troop D and Company F continued to outpost Schmallengenberg being attached directly to CCB from 1400 to 1620, at which time they reverted to Squadron control. Troop A was relieved of attachment to CCR, but remained under CCR tactical control. Then at 1700 Squadron minus returned to Division control, remaining in place with the general mission of rear security in the Division Zone.

The following day, Troop C with 4/E attached and F (-) in support moved at 0700 to occupy and outpost Fredeburg. This was accomplished without incident, and at 1500 1/F was attached to Troop C for use on roadblocks, and F (-) returned to Gleidorf. Troop A assembled East of Holtzhausen, but at 1826 was reattached to CCR and moved East to join the Combat Command.

At noon April 10th, Troops C and B assembled in the vicinity of their Troop CP's and 1/F reverted to Company F control. Then the Squadron minus moved to Berghausen, where Troop C set up roadblocks for civilian control. During the evening, plans were made for Troops C and D to comb the woods in the vicinity of Nieder Landenbeck. The attached assault gun platoons from both troops were released to Commanding Officer Troop E, to be used as supporting artillery against any resistance which might be encountered and the plan further called for a supporting tank platoon to move to a forward assembly area prepared to move promptly on call from either troop.

The following morning the plan was put into effect, executed without meeting resistance, and completed by 1110. Troop C then assembled with Squadron Headquarters, Company F and Service Troop at Nieder Landenbeck, and Troop D assembled at Hengsbeck. Total casualties to date including those suffered by troops attached to Combat Commands, were two killed, four seriously wounded, and eleven lightly wounded.

For the next day, the Squadron was given the mission of taking Meinkenbracht. The plan called for Troops B, C, and D to advance through the woods dismounted with one platoon of tanks each attached to Troops B and C. The assault gun platoons from Troops C and D were to operate as a battery and fire supporting fire under the command of the Assault Gun Troop Commander, Captain GLEN WILLOUGHBY, using the Assault Gun platoon leaders with the reconnaissance troops as forward observers. The final assault on the town was to be made from the South by Troop C, while Troop D was to furnish security on the right (East) flank and take the high ground North of town, and Troop B was to cut the main approach route from the west, take the high ground southwest of town, and join the Troop C attack on order. The 434th Armored Field Battalion was also to furnish supporting fire.

S E C R E T

At 0600, 12 April, the first elements moved out and proceeded to the designated forward assembly areas in the vicinity of Ober Salway³⁹ where the reconnaissance troops dismounted and prepared to go forward on foot accompanied by tanks. Squadron Headquarters set up just East of Ober Salway with the assault guns a few hundred yards farther East. While the reconnaissance troops were pushing through the woods, the 434th and the assault guns fired artillery preparations with such success that by the time observation was gained the town was burning from end to end. Troop B pushed ahead rapidly, and since resistance was light it was considered feasible to let them go ahead and take the town without waiting for the other troops to overcome the more rugged terrain which they had to cross to reach the town. The four assault guns accordingly laid down a concentration which was lifted on order, and Troop B with supporting tank platoon moved in rapidly to take the town. As the troop moved in, the enemy broke and ran, and 27 were killed, four wounded. The total number of prisoners captured for the day was 581, and the Squadron did not suffer a single casualty.

Squadron Headquarters moved into Meinkenbrach close behind the assault. Troop B then pushed route reconnaissance from Meinkenbrach to Linnope and Endorf, and found friendly elements in both, whereupon Squadron Headquarters and Company F (-) moved on to Endorf, closing in at approximately 2100.

On 13 April Squadron moved initially to Allendorf, where the 2nd platoon of Troop D, commanded by 2d Lieutenant HAROLD C. BIANCHE, brought in General Friedrich Kochling, Corps commander, and his staff, whom they had captured. Troop B captured a German supply battalion complete with transportation. The CP then moved to Blintrop, Squadron maintaining defensive positions on the Division left South flank. Troops A and D, and Company F closed in around Squadron Headquarters on the 13th, followed by C, D, and Service Troop on the 14th. The assembled Squadron remained in place and awaited Division orders until the 16th.

During the time the unit was assembled in and around Blintrop, enemy artillery persistently searched the area with harassing fire, and on the 14th the Company F command half-track received a direct hit, killing radio operator and communication sergeant. The Company F gasoline truck was also destroyed by a direct hit, and a Transportation Platoon truck was damaged. The enemy appeared to be using from one to three guns, and part of the time used either AP ammunition or HE with a high percentage of duds. Examination of craters and fragments indicated at least 150 mm.

On the 16th at 0440, Troop C was attached to CCA, at 0955, Troop B was attached to CCB, and at 1025 Squadron minus was attached to CCR. The Squadron less detachments then moved at 1225, and a new Squadron CP was set up at Kalthof, while Troops A and B combed the areas to the Southwest and established two PW collecting points. With the surrender of the 53rd German Army Corps, a continuous stream of prisoners flooded in, and overnight April 16th and 17th Squadron PW cages processed 5138 PW's. Then at 1000 Squadron was relieved of responsibility for collecting PW's, and Troop D was attached to Division Trains to help handle prisoners there.

³⁹ Ober Salwey (also Obersalwey), Germany

S E C R E T

At 1600 Squadron minus set out on the march to the new Division assembly area in the vicinity of Gottingen, Germany, closing 18 April at 1300, with Squadron Headquarters in Hebenshausen. In the new area, Troops B, C, and D reverted to Squadron control, and the Squadron reverted to Division control at 1900.

For the next ten days, maintenance, training, and administrative details received first consideration. The 3rd platoon of Troop A was detached, and the three reconnaissance sections attached one to each Combat Command, in a semi-permanent SOP arrangement. Nothing further to report until 29 April, when the Division moved to a new assembly area extending North from Celle, Germany.

Order of march for the move was Troop D, Squadron Headquarters, E (-), A, B, C, and Service Troop. Company F (-) and the assault gun platoons were detached to march with CCR. Head of the Squadron column crossed the IP at Gottingen at 0600, and at 1715 the Squadron closed in the new assembly area with Squadron Headquarters, Service Troop, and Company F (-) in Munster, Troops A, B, and D at Wietzendorf, and Troop C at Trauen. The following day was spent in maintenance, in preparation for a march to the North.

Total enemy casualties for the month estimated at 126 killed, 7 wounded, 6572 captured, plus 389 enemy vehicles captured. Total casualties suffered remained at the end of the month two killed, fifteen wounded.

(signed)
VINCENT L. BOYLAN
Lieutenant Colonel, Cavalry,
Commanding

- 4 -

S E C R E T

S E C R E T

HEADQUARTERS
87TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON MECHANIZED
A.P.O. #257, U.S. ARMY

3 June 1945

SUBJECT: After Action Report for the Month of May 1945.

To : The Adjutant General, Washington 25, D. C.
(Through Channels)

At the beginning of May, the 87th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized, was assembled in the vicinity of Munster, Germany, with the Squadron Headquarters, Service Troop, and Company F (-) in Munster, Troops A, B, and D at Wietzendorf, and Troop C at Trauen. Orders were received attaching Troop C to Division Trains and Troop B to CCB, and the remainder of the Squadron received a Division marching order and prepared for movement to a new assembly area to the North. The Squadron closed in at 0540 2 May 1945, in the vicinity of Dussin, Germany, located North of the Elbe River. At 1415 the Squadron moved to Carlow, Germany, assuming and maintaining civilian control, collecting PW's and establishing security. In addition, the Squadron conducted a physical search of the Squadron area - completing this phase on 12 May 1945. All other operations, previously mentioned were continued throughout the entire stay in Carlow, Germany, which came to a close on 21 May 1945. During this period the Squadron attended the film showing of "Two Down and One to go", and completed all physical profile examinations.

Troop A being in Squadron reserve and billeted at Wietzendorf, Germany moved on to Trauen, Germany, patrolling roads through Munster and at the same time making contact with the 40th Tank Battalion. Prior to moving, one enemy plane strafed two jeeps on the road patrol 2 May 1945. A forty mile march from Melkof found Troop A in Carlow, Germany, with Squadron Headquarters. A zone having been assigned, Troop A began systematic collection of POW's, located enemy supplies and assumed control of all civilian and displaced personnel in their allotted area. The first platoon garrisoned Reips and Schlag - Resdorf, Germany, the 2nd platoon Gr. Runz⁴⁰ and Headquarters had one platoon of Troop E Carlow, Germany. Twenty-five prisoners were taken the first day.

Troop Headquarters traveled on to Lindow, Germany 5 miles distant and the 2nd platoon moved from Gr. Runz to Sankow. Troop E attached platoon assumed area control around Gr. Siemz. Civilian and displaced personnel were well controlled, and in this connection Burghemeisters were notified in all towns that the number of displaced personnel must be reported.

- 1 -

⁴⁰ Gross Runz, Germany

S E C R E T

At the same time Troop A engineered dismounted searches through heavily wooded areas, resulting in the capture of 19 German prisoners. Further detailed investigation located the following supplies: 12 crated aeroplane engines, 2 Warehouses stocked with electrical and planographic equipment, 1 Warehouse stocked with amphibious equipment.

During the above mentioned operations many enemy vehicles were continually being evacuated to enemy vehicle collection points, and vehicles unmovable were eliminated by burning as were all enemy ammunition and weapons discovered in the troop zone.

Having been assigned a new area, Troop A moved on 13 May 1945, from Lindow to Budersdorf, Germany. The first platoon took over Wendorf, 2nd platoon Kl. Mist⁴¹ 3rd platoon Herrnburg, while Troop headquarters and Troop E platoon also billeted in Ludersdorf, Germany. Reorganization in the newly assigned areas was under way. In Herrnburg, the 3rd platoon under Lieutenant Gear found 1120 German civilians living in two trains comprised of box cars and coalers. Disease was prevalent and unsanitary conditions at a danger point. Lieutenant Gear took quick steps to remedy the existing problem by establishing a Burghemeister responsible for the needs of these civilians.

All Russian, French and Italian displaced personnel were evacuated during this period. Due to reorganization an influx of food and medical supplies, general health, attitude and well-being of the people showed a marked improvement.

At 1700 1 May 1945, Troop B of the 87th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized was attached to Combat Command B, which in turn was attached to the 82nd Airborne Division, and upon moving out of Wietzendorf, Troop B promptly joined the Combat Command column moving in the direction of the Elbe River. Upon reaching the assembly area at 0500 the troop moved out quickly from Stielpelsa performing aggressive reconnaissance for CCB Task Forces. Final objective was reached at Ludwislust on 2 May 1945 with little or no resistance.

Acting directly under orders of General Gavin, Commanding General of the 82nd Airborne Division, the troop moved out at 1615 on 2 May 1945, in an effort to cut through the enemy lines and contact the Russians. On 3 May, after a spectacular march over roads jammed with enemy troops, Troop B contacted elements of the Russian 191st Infantry Division at 0925 in Gvensdorf. Following a second contact with a Russian Division in Brenze⁴², the troop then moved into an assembly area at Bresegard until 5 May 1945. Moving on the troop established and maintained blocks in the vicinity of Renzow as POW and civilian control. Blocks were set up West of Gr. Welzip, Lutzow, Perlin and Renzow. Moving on to Wendischtam and Barchan the Troop moved large groups of POW to the PW cage in Camin. About 20,000 PW's were processed on 6 May 1945.

- 2 -

⁴¹ Klein Mist, Germany

⁴² Probably the town of Brenz, now Alt Brenz, in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Germany

S E C R E T

Leaving Renzow 7 May 1945 the Troop set up in Stintenburg where Reconnaissance patrols established civilian control and processed straggling PW's. Patrols made nightly contact with elements of the 48th Infantry Battalion in the town of Marienthal on odd hours. On the 8 May 1945, Troop B was relieved of their mission with Combat Command B and reverted to Squadron control. Having left Stintenburg for Roggendorf, Germany, Troop B continued their check on the constant flow of stragglers, German vehicles, and equipment of every variety. Patrols were sent to Gadebusch and night patrols made regulated contact on odd hours with elements of 489th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, at Roggendorf, Germany. In addition, CCB was also contacted nightly on the odd hours. On successive nights, the Troop moved from Dechow to Reips, where they remained until the 21st, when the Squadron moved to the Kothen area.

In the new area, Troop D was set up in Hinsdorf, Germany and for the remainder of the month maintained area patrols and a well-regulated training program for all personnel.

On 3 May 1945 the 3rd platoon of Troop C working with a platoon of 283 AAA solved the traffic jam which had developed at Rehna, Germany. Civilians and POW's were rounded up and placed in an enclosure under guard. Before nightfall the enclosure held about 7,000. This was the beginning of the Workshop PWE at Rehna, Germany. On May 4, a regiment of Lithuanian troops, 1,200 in all, surrendered to Troop C. By now the total count of POW's reached 9,000 including officers and enlisted men. Ground was broken for the establishment of permanent shelters and ninety prisoners, bakers by trade, were sent to Rehna where their first day's work produced 5,000 loaves of bread from the seven bakeries located in that town.

Captain Johnson of Troop C, taking three platoons, moved from Brahlstorf to Rehna to take charge of the camp. Meanwhile the 3rd platoon of Troop C under Lieutenant Mulliken moved to Gadebusch, assuming control of the PWE located there.

Reorganization was speeded and detailed plans were laid for a semi-permanent camp. Organization of the PW's was already underway and functioning smoothly. Captain Heyn of the German Navy was appointed Lager commandant. A German hospital was established in Rehna, capable of handling 200 patients, German doctors and attendants operated it under complete supervision of an American Medical Officer.

VE day was fittingly marked by a visit from Colonel Adams of Trains Headquarters, 7th Armored Division. It was apparent to all concerned that perfect coordination and "team play" had resulted in this camp being completely organized and functioning at top speed in the short span of three days. Telephone lines hummed and female German soldiers found themselves placed at work well suited to their past experience. At the same time

S E C R E T

clerks and stenographers were busy working on records and personnel classification. The books now showed a grand total of 10,136 prisoners of war, with a detailed breakdown of 521 officers, 9541 Enlisted men and 74 German women soldiers. Five hundred (500) horses were turned over to farmers for agricultural purposes. In the bakeries, experienced bakers turned out 3,900 loaves of bread. Twenty-four kitchens provided hot meals daily. Mimeographed news releases were distributed to all personnel. Recreation facilities were established and PW shows were produced with their own band and performers.

At 1200 hours 26 May 1945, Troop C was relieved of responsibility for the Prisoner of War enclosure at Rehna, Germany, and reverted to Squadron control.

Meanwhile Troop D operating out of Wietzendorf, Germany, exercised civilian control and policing of surrendering territory which included supervision over five nearby villages, with a Prisoner of War cage established near Ratzburg containing a total of 3,365 prisoners including 17 officers. In Sterley, Germany, outposts and road controls were set up covering 12 square miles, while in Mustin, Germany, military control extended throughout 11 square miles of the surrounding area. This included the garrisoning of towns and setting up of road blocks and necessary patrols. On 9 May 1945 at 2230 a searching patrol was fired upon by three SS troopers in Goldensee, Germany. Patrol returned fire and instigated a thorough search of the area. Later events revealed that one German Trooper was wounded by the patrols fire.

In Neuhof, Germany, platoons were posted in surrounding towns exercising military control, establishing road blocks, and designating patrol operation for systematic search of the area. Displaced personnel were evacuated.

When Squadron Headquarters set up in Carlow, Germany, Company F established a PWE German Army barracks in Dermin. In addition, they established civilian control, searched the area, and collected captured vehicles. Then, after evacuating the prisoners to the British at Ratzeburg and turning the barracks over to the British for use as PW hospital, the Company moved to Carlow on 13 May. On the 15th, the Company moved to the Division Rehabilitation Center in Boltenhagen, where they remained until they returned to Carlow on the 19th.

The Squadron on 21 May 1945 received march orders, and at 1620 arrived at a temporary bivouac area in the vicinity of Osterweddingen. Local security was established in this area.

On 22 May 1945, the Squadron moved into a new Squadron area North and East of Kothen, Germany with Squadron CP located in Osterweddingen, Germany. At the same time troop A moved into Merzien, Troop B into Hinsdorf, Troop C into Baasdorf, Troop D in Osternienburg, and Company F in Jessnitz. A few days later the

S E C R E T

assault gun platoons were relieved of attachment to the reconnaissance troops, and Troop E took over the area around Jessnitz.

For the remainder of the month, a training program was set up for all troops. Local security was established in the Squadron areas, civilian control measures were adopted and show down inspections of individual and organizational equipment were conducted. Likewise, maintenance of vehicles and personnel was kept at a high standard.

This was the state of the Squadron as May 1945 drew to a close with Memorial Day exercises conducted at Osternienburg 30 May 1945.

CHARLES A. CANNON, JR.,
Major, Cavalry,
Commanding.

S E C R E T

HEADQUARTERS
87TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON MECHANIZED
A.P.O. 257, U.S. ARMY

6 July 1945

SUBJECT: After Action Report for the Month of June 1945.

To : The Adjutant General, Washington 25, D. C.
(Through Channels)

For the entire month of June, 1945, the 87th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized occupied an area generally North and East of KOTHEN⁴³, GERMANY (see attached overlay). Squadron Headquarters was located in OSTERNIENBERG, with Troops located as follows:

Troop A: MERZIEN
Troop B: HINSDORF
Troop C: BAASDORF
Troop D: OSTERNIENBERG
Troop E: JESSNITZ

Company F: RAGUHN
Headquarters and Service Troop: OSTERNIENBERG

During this period the Squadron was assigned normal duties of occupation and military government, maintaining road blocks and patrols in the entire area but garrisoning only the towns where Troop Command Posts were located. On the MULDE RIVER Company "F" was in visual contact with the Russian Forces.

Regular training was conducted following a training schedule. Included in this were two command inspections, three Squadron parades, and the required information films, "Your Job in Germany" and "On to Tokyo". A combat firing range was set up for the reconnaissance troops, while the assault gun troop and tank company fired on the Division Tank Firing Range. Information and Education material was also included in the schedule.

For recreation the Squadron Athletic Officer organized a Squadron Softball Team and a Squadron League, with other organized sports to insure full participation. Movies were shown almost every evening, changing the location frequently so that all troops had a chance to attend. Each Troop set up its own day rooms, usually in the form of a beer hall with Information Center either in the same building or nearby.

The attitude of the civilian population was generally very cooperative, and effective control was exercised without serious difficulty.

- 1 -

⁴³ Köthen (or Koethen), Germany

S E C R E T

(signed)
CHARLES A. CANNON, JR.,
Major, Cavalry
Commanding

3 Inclosures:

- 1.- Overlay Squadron Disposition
- 2.- Periodic Reports
- 3.- Journal

[MAP]

87 CAV RCN SQ MECZ.
OVERLAY-DIPOSITIONS of TRS.
MAP of GERMANY-SHEETS NO. P-6,7-Q-6,7
MONTH of JUNE 1945
SCALE - 1/100,000

S E C R E T

HEADQUARTERS
87TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON MECHANIZED
A.P.O. 257, U.S. ARMY

RFK/ejm

2 August 1945.

SUBJECT: After Action Report for the Month of July 1945.

To : The Adjutant General, Washington 25, D. C.
(Through Channels)

At 0930 on the morning of 1 July 1945, the 87th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized was relieved from attachment to CCR and attached to CCB for the march to Walldurn, Germany. Leaving Troop D behind as a security detachment under command of Major RUSSELL F. KAISER, the Squadron column moved South from Osternienburg to the Division IP at Halle, crossing at 1413. The march continued without interruption excepting for normal halts and some traffic delays, until the temporary assembly area near Bad Neustadt was reached at about 0815 next morning. While halted at this point for maintenance, rest, and a hot meal, orders were received that the Squadron (which had been at the tail of the CCB column previously) would move out at 1200 and lead the column on the second part of the march.

The head of the Squadron column reached Walldurn between 1730 and 1800, and from there troop guides lead the troops to their areas as follows:

Troop A - Wettersdorf
Troop B - Glashofen
Troop C - Dornberg
Troop E - Hopfingen
Company F - Hopfingen

Squadron Headquarters was set up in Walldurn, with Headquarters and Service Troop in the same town.

For the entire month of July the Squadron remained in the same area, enforcing security measures and maintaining civilian control. On 12 and 13 July all male civilians between the ages of 10 and 60 were screened, and week later a coordinated search of the area was conducted following a plan known as "Operation Tallyho." The troops took turns guarding intelligence Target Number 19 (16Z093-168089-178079)⁴⁴, and a roadblock was maintained at the railroad crossing just West of Walldurn on the road to Amorbach.

- 1 -

⁴⁴ The "Z" is as in the original.

S E C R E T

Trips were arranged to Heidelberg and Rothenberg as a part of the I & E Program which also included all schools - one in Automotive Mechanics and another in Machine Tools. At the same time, leave and furlough quotas were received for France (Riviera, Paris, Nancy, Dijon), Switzerland, Belgium, and the United Kingdom.

As of 29 July 1945, Major RUSSELL F. KAISER assumed command of the Squadron, Lieutenant Colonel VINCENT L. BOYLAN having left to assume command of the 40th Amphibious Tractor Battalion, and Major CHARLES A. CANNON, JR. having been transferred to the 1st Armored Division. At the close of the month all troops remained in the same towns which they occupied upon arrival in the area, but the strength was reduced from 43 officers, 1 warrant officer and 928 enlisted men as of 1 July 1945 to 34 officers, 3 warrant officers and 561 enlisted men as of 31 July 1945.

(signed)
RUSSELL F. KAISER
MAJOR, Cavalry,
Commanding.

HEADQUARTERS
87TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON MECHANIZED
A.P.O. 257, U.S. ARMY

7 September 1945.

SUBJECT: After Action Report for the Month of August 1945.

To : The Adjutant General, Washington 25, D. C.
(Through Channels)

The entire month of August found the Squadron occupying the same area, with Squadron Headquarters as Walldurn, Germany and troops in areas as follows:

Troop A - Wettersdorf, Germany
Troop B - Glashofen, Germany
Troop C - Dornberg, Germany
Troop D - Rippberg, Germany
Troop E - Hopfingen, Germany
Company F - Hopfingen, Germany

The squadron conducted training, enforced security measures and maintained civilian control. The troops took turns guarding Intelligence Target Number 19 (162093-168089-178079) and a roadblock was maintained at the railroad crossing just West of Walldurn on the road to Amorbach. On 1 August a search was made, of all wooded areas in the Squadron zone, for enemy equipment and ammunition stores. The squadron was relieved of its targets on 9 August and on 23 August was relieved of security of the area. The squadron then devoted its time entirely to redeployment and training.

As part of the I & E Program schools were conducted in Automotive Mechanics and Machine Tools. The school on Automotive Mechanics was discontinued on 10 August 1945. Leaves and Furloughs were given to France, Switzerland, Belgium and the United Kingdom.

On the 6th of August, Major CLYDE W. BRADSHAW assumed command relieving Major RUSSELL F. KAISER, who became Executive Officer. Major BRADSHAW was transferred on 23 August and Major KAISER again assumed command of the Squadron. The strength of the squadron was reduced from 34 officers, 3 warrant officers and 561 enlisted men at the beginning of the month to 16 officers, 3 warrant officers and 351 enlisted men as of 31 August 1945.

(signed)
RUSSELL F. KAISER
Major, Cavalry
Commanding