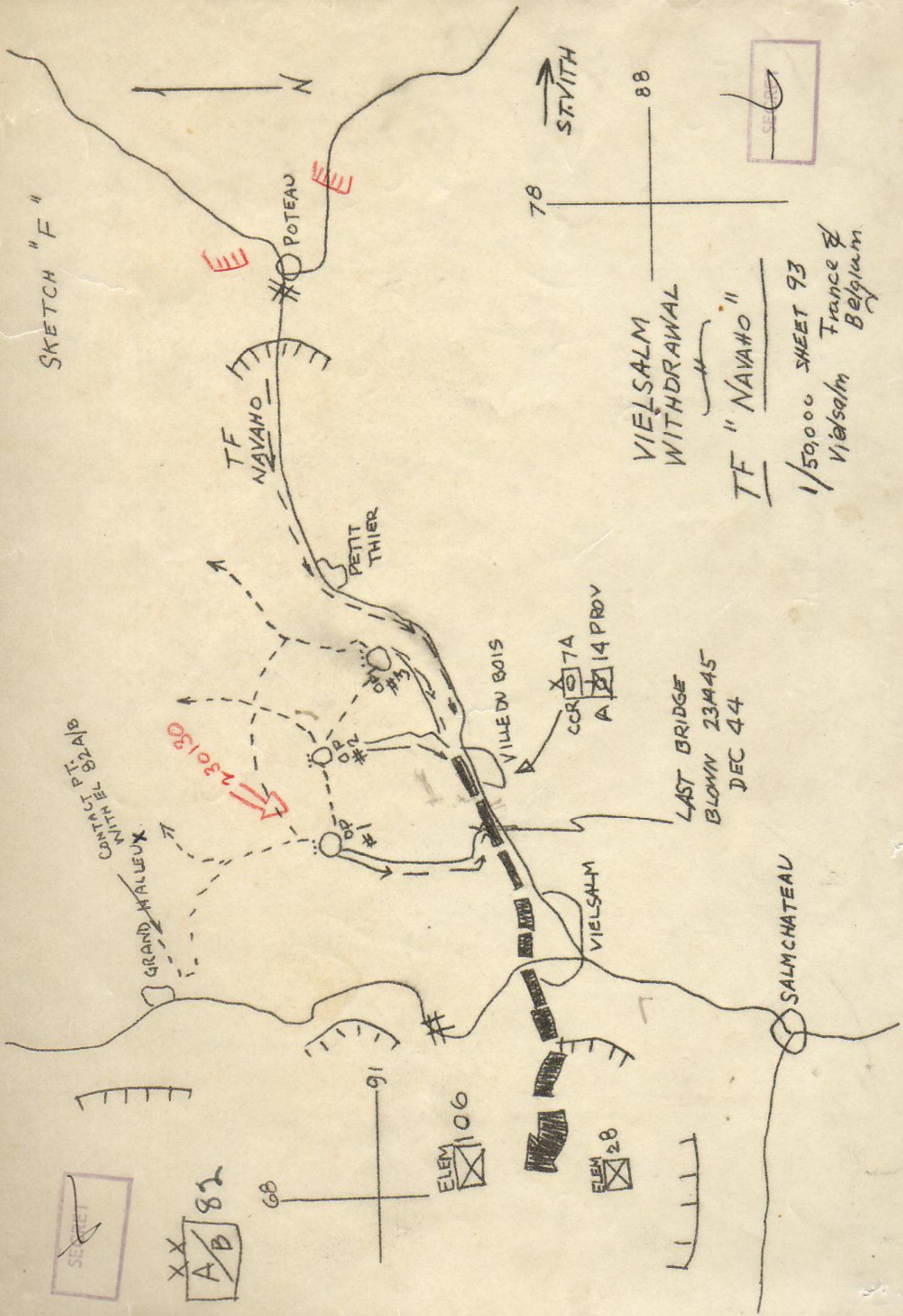


SKETCH "F"



VIELSALM
WITHDRAWAL

TF "NAVAHO"

1/50,000 SHEET 93
Vielsalm France & Belgium

SECRET

XX
A B
82

68

ELEM 106

ELEM 28

STVITH

78

88

LAST BRIDGE
BLOWN 23M45
DEC 44

SALMCHATEAU

VILLE DU BOIS

VIELSALM

POTEAU

TF
NAVAHO

PETIT
THIER

GRAND HALLUEUX
CONTACT P 12/4/8

230130

91

CCR 74
A
14 PROV

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Attack ON Grandmenil - Manhay 26 Dec 44

Lt Col Jones TD Reports 5 Tks in Grandmenil - Manhay 26 02 00 Dec 44

Attack Starts 26 09 15 Dec 44

Trap Squeezed out 26 12 00 Dec 44

Shifted BACK 26 18 30 Dec 44

LIVE 26 17 30 Dec 44 - Attack Ends

Tks 02 00 26 Dec

106 Div COOKS + CLERKS

B Trap Shifted to New Sector 26 13 30 Dec 44

75th Div



Action at Grandmenil - Manhay

C Troop - 32nd CAV Ren Sqdn.

28-30
Dec. 44

dig-in
270100
Dec. 44

Leave for
Werbomont
30 Dec 44

P-38's dive-bomb
Parked Troop
Vehicles
281200 Dec 44

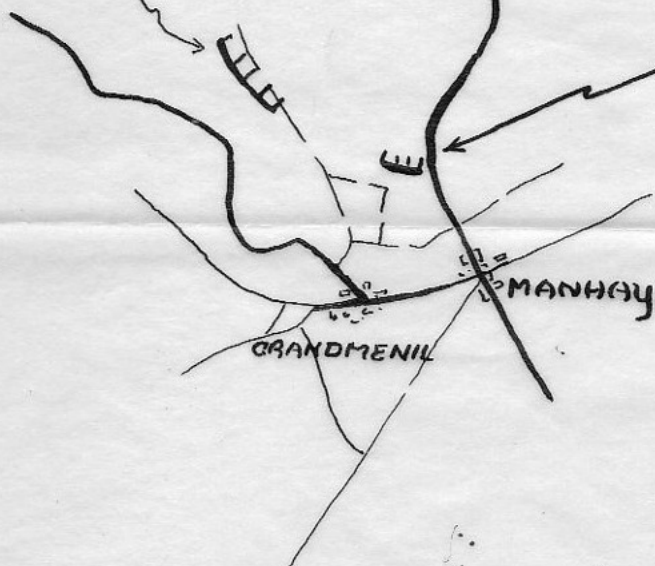
58

93

~~SECRET~~

G Co. 424th Inf.
Moves out leaves
C Troop left flank
open ~ Night 28-29
Dec. 1944

Looking for gap between
H & G Companies 424th Inf.
SEE 52ND AB & 3A Troops near here



Map Reference
DURBUY ~ sheet
France & Belgium
Sheet # 92
1 / 50,000

Note

PERSONNEL OF C TROOP WHO SUPERVISED

THE DRAWING OF THIS OVERLAY WERE

NOT DEFINITELY SURE OF THE DATES

INDICATED. DISCREPANCIES MAY BE

NOTED IN COMPARING THESE DATES WITH

DATA FOUND IN 32nd SQDN JOURNAL.

SQDN SOURCE APPEARS MORE AUTHENTIC

J.T.S.

55

~~SECRET~~

65

GERMAN COUNTERATTACK

(16 Dec 44-1 Jan 45)

SECRET

- B Troop, 32nd Cav Rcn Sqdn, 14th Cav Gp. (Mecz)
- Interview with - Capt. Franklin P. Lindsey Jr, CO
 - 1/Lt Ralph A. Bendinilli, Executive
 - 2/Lt William Reilly, 1st Pltn ldr
 - 2/Lt Robert A. Blodgett, 2nd Pltn ldr
 - 1/Lt Marshall Alexander, 3rd Pltn ldr.
 - Cpl John Unger, Demolition agent

-Place, Hognoul, Belgium. 7 Jan 1945 1600 - 1900 hours.

This troop, like the others in the 32nd Squadron, was engaged in refitting, training, resting and receiving reinforcements after having played its part in sustaining Von Rundstedt's Counterattack of 16 December 1944.

Members of the reconnaissance troop were billeted in private homes in the above named ~~Belgian~~ Belgian village and were charged with the anti-paratroop defense of the vulnerable, open ground that lies immediately north of Liege. At the time of these interviews, First U.S. Army thought that enemy airborne troops might be dropped in that vicinity to facilitate the securing of a bridgehead across the Meuse at Liege. Only enemy fire in the area was the constant stream of V-1 robot bombs that tumbled over on their way towards Brussels, or else landed after having over-shot Liege.

- Overlays and Sketches -

See Marked Map "Front-Line Positions" 1/25,000

appended to Group Material.

Sketch - "Action at Heuvel" - appended.

See Marked Map - Action at Grand Meuil - Manhay
1/50,000 appended to Sqdn material.

-Interviewer-Lt Jack Shea, 2d Info & Hist Sv (Hq First Army)

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SECRET

When the 32nd Cav Squadron responded to the 14th Cavalry Group's movement order at 0600 16 Dec 1944, B Troop of the squadron, commanded by Capt Franklin P. Lindsey Jr, was designated as the squadron's reserve. Lindsey was ordered to move to the vicinity of Auw by Lt Col Paul Ridge, the squadron commander, and to await further orders there.

The squadron, alerted at 0600, moved out at 0932 and started towards Manderfeld, Germany. There, the command posts of the 14th Group and the 18th Squadron were located. ~~It~~ It was from this point that the ~~14th Cavalry~~ cavalry group wished to commit the 32nd Squadron in order to implement the support of the 18th Squadron's troops who were battling attacking forces of about a reinforced brigade strength. (See General Story on 14th Group - submitted for Pamphlet Material, 23 Jan 1945)

At approximately 1000, B Troop passed by A Troop in the vicinity of Andler, and turned down the Andler - Wischeid - Auw road. Two-thirds of the way towards Wischeid, B Troop was ordered to halt and remain in present position. Squadron requested the troop's location, but no further orders were issued until about 1600 when the troop was advised to organize a defense around Andler. (See Marked Map.) At about that time, Capt Lindsey saw elements of Gp Headquarters moving west through Andler.

After darkness more specific orders came to the troop CP. These orders specified that at least two reconnaissance teams be posted on the Andler - Auw road, and requested overlays of the troop's positions. (A reconnaissance team consists

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SECRET

of 10 men -- four in an armored car, three in a mortar jeep, and three in a machine gun jeep. There are three such teams to each reconnaissance platoon, and three platoons in each troop.) The supply train for the troop was sent to Schonberg with instructions to withdraw to ~~Schonberg~~ Vielsalm if Schonberg was not suitable. The sergeant in charge found Schonberg undesirable, went to Vielsalm, a move that drew commendation from Capt Lindsey later.

With the reconnaissance-team outposts established, Lindsey ordered the platoon leaders to set their schedules of watches and have "every man awake at 0500." Soon the troop's operational pattern had settled down to quiet watchfulness and listening. Night visibility was exceptionally poor, and many of the group interviewed mentioned that they had never recalled a darker night.

.At 0630 on 17 Dec, Capt Lindsey received orders from squadron headquarters directing him to send combat patrols towards Manderfeld and Auw for the purpose of establishing contact with the enemy. He planned to send one patrol from each platoon, ^{each} probably of about one reconnaissance ^{team} in strength. Having made his plans, he summoned his platoon leaders shortly before 0700. The three lieutenants reported having come down to the CP in their armored cars. Lindsey was about to explain to them that the patrols should be sent out in three directions -- one over the road from Andler to Auw, and two over the roads that led from Andler to Manderfeld. Before he could issue his orders, Sgt Earl L. Turner, radio operator for the third team of the 2nd Platoon, transmitted a hurried message, "Enemy has us surrounded." He immediately went off the air.

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The group at the troop CP knew that this team was the one positioned furthest to the east on the Andler - Auw road. It was commanded by Sgt Earl R. Ellingsen.

The news was immediately relayed^a to squadron headquarters, and a 'roger' reply secured by 0720. Minutes later the next armored car in the nearer team on the Andler-Auw road flashed a similar message, but in this case gave added warnings of tanks being used by the enemy.

"Enemy surrounding us - tank trained on armored car," came the message from the vehicle which was less than 500 yards from the troop CP. A more detailed account of the second attack was later learned by Lindsey. This report came from four members of the team Cpl Royon, T/5 Whiteside, PFC Battiori and Pvt G. Henderson. These four had been standing near the armored car when the attack suddenly burst in ~~upon~~^{upon} them. They were able to make their way back to the troop CP and tell of the tank and the enemy infantry, dressed in snow camouflage suits, that had suddenly swept in ~~upon~~^{upon} them.

It was 0730 by this time, and Lindsey sought permission from squadron to begin a withdrawal movement towards Schonberg. The static position ~~that he was in~~ deprived his troops of the organizational mobility that was one of their strongest weapons. He did not want his troop to be overpowered in the darkness, when they could fight a more telling battle in daylight — as was later proven. (See "Action at Heuem" below)

However, all vehicles and men had assigned fields of fire and they started to blaze back at any sign of enemy movement that they saw. It was only a few minutes before an enemy tank reached the intersection where the road from Auw joins

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the Eimerscheid - Schonberg road at Andler. The attacking enemy seemed to have the outpost positions well plotted and mortar and flat-trajectory fire struck near the troop CP. Pvt Henderson, one of the four men who had escaped being surrounded at the second reconnaissance team to be struck by the enemy, was wounded by shell fragments as he fought near the CP.

At the time of the break of the ~~break~~ enemy attack the platoon leaders from all platoons had been present at the CP. They had had their armored cars with them, and under cover of the weapons in these vehicles the troop slowly withdrew from the Andler position. Finally, the direct fire of the enemy tank at the intersection described above forced the troop southwards towards Schonberg. By 0745 Lindsey had lost about 19 of his troop, decided that he must find another delay position, and one that would afford the cavalrymen an opportunity to use their fire power against an enemy that could be spotted in the light of day.

Not all of the troop was able to withdraw to the south. Reconnaissance teams from one of the platoons had been in position on the secondary road that connects Andler with Herresbach, these personnel and vehicles, as well as two that were stationed to the north of Andler on the road towards Holzheim, eventually joined the 32nd Squadron's Headquarters group at Herresbach, and ~~withdrew~~ withdrew with them towards Meyerode. (See interview with Maj Kracke and Staff of 32nd Sqdn)

By 0800 the B troopers had reached Schonberg. It was daylight, but as they prepared to organize a defensive position there, nearby friendly troops warned that tanks were advancing

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SECRET
at 0815,

on Schonberg from the southeast. This news came according to Captain Lindsey, shortly after contact had been regained with the troops that were pressing down from the direction of Andler. The delay position was not suitable for meeting enemy forces from both southeast and northeast directions. So again, contact was broken as the troopers withdrew towards the west on the Schonberg-St. Vith road, searching for a section in the natural corridor down which the road ran, in which they could effectively delay the enemy armor and foot troops.

It was finally in the vicinity of Heuem (see Marked Map) that Capt Lindsey and his troop finally found a location that suited delay possibilities. As the cavalrymen hurriedly prepared trees alongside the road for demolition to form road blocks, other American troops streamed up the road from the east. Some of the vehicles that passed were identified by Lindsey and the group interviewed as being from the "333rd FA Gp".

The six armored cars and about ten machine gun and mortar jeeps that the depleted troop had with it at the time, were deployed as shown in the accompanying sketch (appended to this interview). The troopers were reluctant to form a road block by blowing the charges that had been fastened to the trees for fear of trapping additional American vehicles that might be coming down the road. It was this reluctance that eventually caught the troopers unaware as the first enemy tank -- a Mk IV -- poked its nose around the corner of a bend in the road, and started to traverse its guns to bear on the lightly armed armored cars.

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SECRET

The first enemy tank that came around the turn in the road had its turret open. The troopers could clearly see the enemy tank commander perched in the open turret. He was wearing a black beret, ~~which is the~~ characteristic ^{headress} ~~of~~ of the enemy tankers. Two of the armored cars, the westernmost two in position, immediately opened up with AP rounds. Direct hits were scored, but they bounced off the tank's armor. In the excitement, T/5 Russell made a fortunate mistake, slipped a HE round in just after having fired an AP shell. The lighter HE shot struck a few feet above the usual impact point of the heavier AP shot; In fact it burst near the rim of the open turret. The German tank commander slumped over and the tank withdrew. It did not show again as the cavalymen began their delaying action in earnest.

They weren't frightened now, nor were they confused as they had been during the night attack that had first struck them at Andler. For four hours the light machine guns and mortars shattered every attempt of the enemy foot troops to maneuver in against the delay position. With LMG cross-fires, and carnival-like sharpshooting the troopers seemed to enjoy nipping at the enemy. (All members of the group seemed to recall the details of this fight with particular humor -- For instance, the way in which Cpl Joseph Unger (the man who had, in his nervousness, neglected to blow the road block) took to shooting Germans. His frequent cries of triumph to Lindsey, "Captain! Paying for myself today - Been costing the Govt. money until today!" I think I got another one. Every weapon that the troopers had was fired in this phase of fighting. Several good-natured joshings were still directed against Lt Beninille, concerning the way he "hosed" .50 cal fire close overhead of the men on.

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on the left flank as he attempted to stop German infantry from infiltrating through the wooded high ground to the north and northeast of the position that the troopers held.)

Until 1200 the enemy infantry seemed to try blind attempts at infiltrating towards the cavalrymen's positions. None of the group could sense any particular ~~blank~~ maneuver that the enemy had tried until around 1230 or 1300 when a definite plan seemed to have put into action, and, in fact, seemed to be meeting with some success. Roughly, the enemy managed to infiltrate a few men forward to the southeast of the cavalry positions. This section of troops provided a base of fire for a flanking force that was sent up through the woods on the high ground that commanded the northern approaches to the cavalry positions.

However, the success or failure of this maneuver was never determined, for, at 1300, the 32nd Squadron ordered the B troopers to continue their withdrawal towards Meyerode. At Heuem, B Troop had successfully held the enemy for at least four hours.

At Meyerode, which the troop reached by traveling through St. Vith, Capt. Lindsey reported on his four-hour fight that had cost him no casualties. He was instructed to take up positions in Wallerode, southwest of Meyrode. The troop was in position by 1400 hours, and settled down to ~~watch~~ watching the wooded terrain to its east.

It was at Wallerode that several of the troop's reconnaissance teams that had been cut off from the main body of the troop by the enemy's sudden advance at Andler, (see Marked Map) rejoined the troop. Sgt Donald E. "Bones" Thompson, in charge

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SECRET
Herresbach

of the teams that were strung along the Andler road, extricated his people by joining with the forces of C Troop and finally withdrawing from Herresbach over the cross-country trail that was blazed to Meyerode. (See Interview "Withdrawal From Herresbach") Sgt. Howard L. Hall, whose single reconnaissance team had been positioned north of the Andler-Auw road junction and was cut off by the appearance of a German tank at that intersection, took his team to the "north, and then we went southwest." He did not recall the exact route nor the names of the villages through which he passed. The amazing part of his statement concerning the escape, is that he passed through territory that had been over-run by the enemy two or three hours earlier. (See "A Troop interview with Lt. Harmon" - re: Honsfled) but did not run into any enemy elements.

The B Troopers' stay at Wallerode was uneventful save for the P-47's that strafed the woods to the east of their positions at about 1600. Evidently, the Germans had brought light flak guns well forward with them in their rapid advance, for a heavy blanket of light flak rose to meet the passes of the American fighter-bombers. When asked about other units in the area, Lindsey remarked that F Company of the 32nd was known to be in the vicinity of Wallerode, and that some of his men there had met the 1st Sgt of D Troop, 87th Cav Rcn Sqdn, attached to the 7th Armored Division.

Shortly after 1600, B Troop was told to move towards Vielsalm. Traveling via Sart les St. Vith - Poteau - (there at 1900 where they saw enemy flares to the north) - they inched through traffic jammed roads in the darkness and arrived at Vielsalm at 180530 Dec 44.

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In Vielsalm, on the morning of the 18th of December, Lindsey described a "reorganization of the 14th Group by Lt Col Damon," who formerly commanded the 18th Squadron.

The elements at Vielsalm stood by, listened to the radio transmissions describing the fight that was then taking place at Poteau. The road that led towards the east to Poteau from Vielsalm was still cluttered with traffic when, at 1000, B Troop was ordered to secure the ground north and east of Vielsalm. For this operation, one platoon of C Troop - 18th Squadron, was attached to B. The C platoon had filtered into Vielsalm after having become separated from the rest of its parent organization on the way back from Born - Medell.

Purpose of this employment of B Troop was to create some sort of a screen through which the elements withdrawing from Poteau could pass. Lindsey chose to organize the Poteau - Vielsalm road at Ville du Bois, where he took advantage of a deep-cut railroad horeshoe to use as an anti-tank trap. He placed the weapons of his armored cars and reconnaissance teams in an all-around defense at this point, and found that the continuously over-lapping bands of defensive fire had very good ranges at which to operate.

However, this defensive position was never used. The withdrawing troops from Poteau passed through a road block that had been prepared by Task Force Navaho (See 7th Armd Material), and at 1600 Lindsey joined the remnants of the whole group in the vicinity of Rencheux. There, the remnants were reorganized into a single cavalry reconnaissance squadron which was immediately attached to the 7th Armored Division.

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19 Dec 1944

SECRET

Under the reorganization plan implemented by Lt Col Damon, Capt Lindsey and the remnants of his B Troop received 27 men from 14th Cav Gp Headquarters Troop who were accompanied by that troop commander Capt. North. (See Interview with Headquarters Troop - 14th Gp). In addition, Lindsey received two M-20 armored personnel carriers to replace the two M-8 armored cars that he had lost. A three-quarter-ton truck and a bantam were also added to the troop's depleted vehicle complement, and the unit was reorganized and "fit for combat" at 191300. Total strength of the troop at this time was about 125 - 130 officers and men.

At 1500 Lindsey was ordered to procede south on the Salmchateau - Bovigny highway, and take up positions in the towns of Gruflange, Thommen and Espeler. His troop's normal strength (reorganized) was augmented by three platoons of 75 mm, ~~self~~^{air}-propelled howitzers from reorganized E Troop, and eleven light tanks (five from the 32nd Sqdn, balance from 18th). For the purposes of simplification of control and message-writing, Lindsey's force was known as "Task Force Lindsey", and operated in the sector of Task Force Jones, part of the 7th Armored Division's troops in the area. General purpose of the armored and cavalry units in this area was to organize a defensive screen around the southern mouth of the Bovigny - Salmchateau corridor. It was down this corridor that the supplies for the fighting elements of the 7th Armd Div came, and up this same corridor that different ordnance, QM and general service and supply elements were withdrawing in the face of Von Rundstedt's attack.

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Lindsey moved his task force to the Beho crossroads. he had been told that neither friendly or enemy troops were in the three towns that he had been instructed to occupy and hold, with the specifications that he secure the towns by darkness on 19 Dec.

Lindsey split his reorganized reconnaissance troop into its component three platoons, sent the first platoon to Espeler, the second to Thommen and the third to Gruflange. With each of these three reconnaissance platoons went one platoon of assault guns from the reorganized E Troop. The 11 light tanks were initially held near Beho in the position of a mobile reserve for the Task Force.

The sub-task forces held their assigned towns from darkness 19 Dec until 23 Dec 44, when they joined in the general withdrawal of all elements from this sector of the huge "Fortified Goose Egg" that was being held by 7th Armored elements and attachments.

(The following breakdown of stories at the various garrisons ~~were~~^{was} secured from the platoon leaders who were present in the three towns. - JTS)

Lt Marshall Alexander's sub-task force had an uneventful two days at Gruflange during the 20th and 21st of Dec. Spasmodic artillery fire of medium caliber struck the town several times, but it did not hinder the emplacements or mined road blocks that the cavalrymen and assault gunners had established there.

On 22 Dec 44 a request from 7th Armd specified that mopping-up patrols be sent through the Hohenbusch woods and through the wooded terrain that surrounds CR 515 at (847816).

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The patrolling mission took about four hours, and while the reconnaissance teams were engaged in the mopping-up (no contact with the enemy), some medium tanks from the 7th Armd's tank complement passed through the town to the south. The medium tankers said that they were to assist elements of the 14th Armd Inf in an effort to withdraw. The cavalrymen were not sure of the position of the 14th Armored Inf, nor were they exactly sure that the 424th Inf of the 106th Div was in the vicinity of CR 515. Most of them had "heard" that the infantry troops were there, but were uncertain as to the exact dispositions of any friendly troops in the area.

At 1200 hours on 22 Dec 44, the Gruflange garrison was ordered to move north to Crombach, where the CP of CCB 7th Armd Div was located. There, Alexander reported to Gen Clark, and received a mission to provide foot patrols to go northwest towards Hinderhausen.

The foot patrols were completed, but in doing so the members of the patrols found that their activity drew enemy artillery fire from the east and southeast whenever they moved across open terrain.

The patrols returned and the cavalry elements were billeted in the houses of Crombach as darkness fell on the night of the 22nd. In the building that he had chosen for a CP, Alexander and some of his non-coms listened to the radio traffic that was going on between the tank and tank destroyer elements of the 7th Armd Div in the Crombach area.

It was around midnight when the intercom blurted out the news that "one or four or six" Tiger tanks were headed for

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Crombach from a northeasterly direction. The enemy tanks were reportedly coming along the rail line that passes near Crombach as it runs from St Vith, south towards Gouvy.

Alexander reported the gradual development of the morale of the tankers and TD men as they spoke over the intercom. At first there was a studied coolness to the voices that reported the tanks. Frequent assertions that "We're ready. Let the bastards come." crackled back and forth over the wireless. However, each successive message held less confidence, and soon it was realized by the personnel in the CP that the mediums and TD's were not breaking up the tank threat, but rather were abandoning their tanks and withdrawing. They seemed to have little desire to match the armor and fire power of their vehicles against the vaunted Tiger.

An unidentified colonel grasped the situation quickly and set out on foot to rally the men who were breaking. He collared the crews of two M-10 TD's and three medium tanks, made them place their armored vehicles in positions for the close-in defense of the town.

Meanwhile there was a hurried scuffling to get the remnants of the infantry troops in the towns together for a defense of the town. In the confusion few of the squad leaders or platoon leaders knew exactly where ~~the~~^{their} men had gone to sleep. Names were being called by many different voices, and there were altercations amongst the junior commanders as to who was responsible for what sector. Alexander deployed the cavalrymen in a firing line, gave them sectors of responsibility, but could get no cooperation from other junior leaders as a means to protect his flanks

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SECRET

and rear. Finally, though from what source no one seemed to know, a rumor-order passed through the group in the town, announcing that the place was "untenable." Troops and vehicles on all sides began to pack up shop and leave. Alexander's troops held for half an hour, but as small arms fire and what were thought to be bazookas started blazing at the other end of town, the cavalrymen, too, mounted vehicles, picked up the infantrymen that wanted to ride with them, and started back for Gruflange.

On the way out of Crombach, just prior to the first light of day, small arms fire sputtered against the cavalry column at (805843). Everyone immediately dismounted and returned the fire. Several long bursts of .50 cal fire in the direction of the enemy fire seemed to suffice in quieting it, and when it was not returned, the cavalrymen again mounted and continued towards the southwest. Arriving at the high ground that overlooks Gruflange, the troops found that Gruflange, in their absence, had been taken over by the enemy.

There was still a good deal of confusion around the road intersection at Maldange, but the superior ground there, and the necessity for keeping that intersection open, resolved a defense of that area. Under the directions of Capt Lindsey, Lt Alexanders' troops were stationed there. The fire of the cavalry reconnaissance vehicles and assault guns was augmented by the arrival of the light tanks that had been in mobile reserve. (See interviews F Company - 32nd and 18th Squadrons.)

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The defensive position at Maldange was established at 230900 Dec 44. In addition to the troops of Task Force Lindsey, there were about 200 infantry troops that had been straggling past. They were pressed into service to man this defense line.

At that time, the elements of Task Forces Jones, Lindsey and other 7th Armored elements within the "Fortified Goose Egg" had started their withdrawal from the perimeter's shell. H - hour, designated by 7th Armored Command had been 0600, and at that time elements started to systematically withdraw out through the Bovigny - Salchateau escape corridor. Task Force Lindsey had been instructed to fight a delaying action in the area near Maldange - Beho. More specifically they had been instructed to hold at Beho until 1300 at all costs, then, at H + seven hours they were to withdraw through the corridor. The cavalrymen automatically assumed the responsibility for the safe withdrawal that had attached themselves to the vehicles.

Hardly had the defensive line been established than the enemy started to attack. Initial estimate of the attackers was somewhere in the vicinity of 500 foot troops, supported by artillery, mortars and self-propelled assault guns.

With a generally stubborn defensive stand, the elements of TF Lindsey stood their ground and smashed the infiltration attack of the enemy. There seemed to be little effort made on the part of the enemy to coordinate the use of its supporting fires to complement the advance of the foot troops. It was just a case of all the enemy spasmodically working forward, while the cavalry weapons sought remunerative targets for automatic weapons, light cannon and mortars.

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The defensive barrier eventually began to disintegrate at 1245 when the 1st platoon of the task force, accompanied by its assault guns, broke contact and withdrew to Beho. In turn, the second and then the third platoon climbed onto their vehicles, followed the first, and passed through it at the Beho crossroads. (753808) Self-propelled TD's from the 7th Armored were at the crossroads when the elements of Task Force Lindsey passed through there at 1315.

Experiencing none of the difficulty that later caught elements of Task Force Jones in the Bovigny - Salmchateau 'cul de sac' (see Interview with Capt Jones - also General Story 14th Cav Gp - submitted for Pamphlet material, 23 Jan 45)

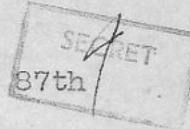
With no other opposition from enemy sources, the B troopers went to Cierreux, where they were ^ere_Aleased from the TF Lindsey assignment by Maj Dill, executive for Lt Col Damon in the re-organized Cavalry squadron. At Rahier the cavalrymen tacked onto the group column that was headed for Aywaille, where they spent the night 23 - 24 Dec. Their task in the operations of Task Force Lindsey had come to a conclusion, a conclusion that prompted "Gen Clark of the 7th Armd to say of them.. 'One damn good job of delaying action...a job well done.'" (Quotes obtained from Capt Lindsey and the group.)

From Aywaille the B troopers moved to Xhignesse where they arrived at 1200 on 24 Dec 1944. They had only managed to get about four or five hours of sleep the night before. By 1515, the original B troopers had been separated from the attachments with which they had been working in Task Force Lindsey. At 1700 Maj Dill instructed Capt Lindsey to

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form a T/O troop for immediate attachment to the 87th Reconnaissance Squadron of the 7th Armored Division. To do this it was necessary for Lindsey to draw about 24 men from the Group's Headquarters Troop, and requisition about 14 vehicles from the newly-organized Headquarters Troop of the 14th Provisional Cavalry Squadron. Finally, Lindsey found that he had about 120 men, the necessary vehicles, and was more or less ready for combat. All of the men were very tired from the eight days of fighting that they had done, and this fatigued state was reflected in their sleep-sluggish eyes and wearied reactions. It was with no Christmas spirit that they set out on a new mission on Christmas Eve.

It was with difficulty that the B Troop of Capt Lindsey located the command post of Lt Col Boylan's 87th Recn Sqdn. Having first gone to Grand Bru, he finally made contact with Boyland at 1150 on Christmas Day. Boylan sent the troop to be billeted at Deux-Rys, where they had a Christmas dinner of hotdogs. "That, we will never forget," said Lindsey.

At 0200 on 26 Dec 1944, Lt Col Jones, the commander of "Task Force Jones" that had fought and then been trapped in the Bovigny-Salmchateau corridor, arrived at the CP of Lt Col Boylan's reconnaissance squadron. Jones was in an excited state. He reported that as his jeep passed through the central road net in the vicinity of Grandmenil - Manhay, 6000 meters to the south, he had been fired upon by German tanks.

This road net nerve center was regarded as a critical communications point, and steps were immediately taken to retake it, and/or prevent the German armor from using it.

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Lindsey's troop was immediately alerted, and the men rolled out of their blankets and prepared to move. In the hodge-podge planning that was necessitated by the enemy's unexpected appearance in this sector, the command had difficulty in marshalling forces from the many units that were scattered through the area. Few units were cognizant of just who or where their neighboring units were.

Lindsey visited the CP of Gen Clark, CO of CCB 7th Armd Div, where he was instructed to reform his reconnaissance troop into two infantry platoons. He hurried back to the billets of his troop, split the troop into two parts — designating these separate platoons as the first and third — the men from the second platoon were interspersed amongst the personnel of the other two platoons. Finally, the organization resolved itself into two platoons composed of two 12-man squads in each platoon. In addition to the M-1, carbine and TSMG's that the individuals were equipped with, Lindsey distributed two LMG's to each platoon.

Lt Col Fuller of the 38th Inf gave Lindsey his first movement orders indicating that the troop should be formed on an LD at (505919). Leaving the radio operators behind, Lindsey moved his bastard platoons out mounted on eight jeeps. These jeeps were left on the main road that led to Grandmenil, where the drivers stayed to care for them.

The second of a series of contradictory and confusing orders came about 0500 on the 26th of December. Lt Col Fuller returned to tell Lindsey to move his troop to (513920), a few hundred yards south of a rustic crucifix, where they prepared to attack towards the south. The situation was continually

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confused by orders and counterorders during which the troopers did little but dig in to escape the spasmodic shelling that the enemy infrequently threw into the area. Greatest danger was the possibility of tree bursts, for the area was heavily wooded.

Finally, at 0730 Fuller informed Lindsey that the troopers would move south from their positions at 0915 for the purpose of securing Grandmenil. At the start of the attack B company of the 38th Inf was on the right of the B troopers, and A company of the same regiment was on their left. (See Marked Map - Attack on Grand Menil-Manhay - appended to this interview. Communications were poor because of the unorthodox system of assigning sectors to the remnants of all units that happened to be in the area. As the attack developed, the cavalrymen were to find that their flank units kept continually changing, and finally, in the last phase of the attack, completely new units would be situated on their left and right.

Little enemy opposition was experienced as the troops left the LD and started sweeping towards the south. The same control that made the flow of information insufficient hindered the control of the attacking units, and the attack moved more slowly than it should have.

Shortly before noon, as the troops reached a section of the terrain where the woods thinned out into semi-open fields, the B troopers received the single heaviest casualty blow that they had taken in the counterattack. A single round of flat-trajectory fire slammed into a group of troopers who were working towards a suspected enemy machine gun position in a strawstack near a house. Seven were wounded, two of them mortally, by the burst.

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Shortly after this occurrence, the B troopers found that the narrowing of their sector of the advance had caused them to be "squeezed out" of the attack. (See Marked Map) They were instructed to move to the west and were committed in a second sector that faced towards ZGrandmenil. Little advancing was done from this new commitment, when they were again shifted back to their old sector. There they worked forward to the line along the ~~the~~ secondary road at (524903), where their advance eventually ended. There they dug in, shivered in their fox holes during the 26 - 28 - 29th of December while the enemy continued to throw in occasional artillery fire.

At 1400 on 29 Dec 44, the troop was relieved by L Company of the 291st Inf (75th Div). Lindsey moved his men back about 1000 yards where they remained in regimental reserve for the 291st Infantry until 1400 on 29 Dec 44. From the 291st Inf, the cavalrmen were released to the 87th REn Sqdn, who, in turn, released them to the 14th Group at 0700 on 30 Dec 44. The Group was withdrawn from the front on 1 Jan 45, and went to the positions near Liege where these interviews were made.

(For fuller details on the activities at Thommen and Espeler see Interviews with F Companies of the 18th and 32 nd Squadrons. Repitition of detail made it inadvisable to treat these actions fully in this interview. - JTS)

Complete casualty reports are appended to General Story, 14th Group, Material for Pamphlet - 23 Jan 45. - JTS

LT. ~~John~~ Shea
2nd I & H. Sv.
Hq First ARMY

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Action at Fleum

B Troop - 32nd Sqn.
Delay from these
positions - All
weapons employed
0900 - 1300
17 Dec 44

SS infiltration
attack through
wooded high ground
(Approx. 1100 hrs.)

Trees prepared for
demolition for road
block - Never blown
(Approx 0915 hrs.)
SS Tank CO - KOH by
37 mm HE - Wildhirs
(Approx. 1000 hrs.)

SS Infantry
establish firing line by
infiltration
(Approx 1200 hrs.)

SS
226 9474.

