

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE
38th CAVALRY
RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON
(MECHANIZED)

(Written by Maj. Charles E. Rousek, Exec. Officer of the 38th eff. Aug 8, 1944)

1945
PRESTICE CZECHOSLOVAKIA

(From Col. Harold J. Samsel's Book)
("Operational History of the 102nd Cavalry Regiment Essex Troop World War II")

ON THE WAY

On the 15th of November 1942 at Fort Bliss, Texas, by authority contained in letter AGF 322.12/I (1st Cav. Div.) (R) GNGGT September 12, 1942, the 3rd Reconnaissance Squadron was activated with a cadre of 400 men from the 113th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, 2nd Armored Division and the Cavalry Replacement Training Center. The designation was later changed to the 38th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mechanized), the spirited little outfit, which was destined to perform so gallantly and brilliantly in the five campaigns in Europe.

On the 25th of April 1943, the Squadron moved to Camp Maxay, Texas where it trained for six months. On 7 November 1943, the Squadron arrived at Camp Shanks, New Jersey for shipment overseas, and one week later on the 14th of November, it boarded the Queen Mary in New York Harbor. On the 20th November, the Squadron disembarked at Firth of Clyde, entrained from Greenock, Scotland and the following day arrived at Exeter, Devon, England, where it joined the 102nd Cavalry Group.

Another half year passed while the men of the 38th trained on English moors, played darts in English pubs, chilled in English fogs and talked of the invasion of Europe. Then one day in the early spring, the Squadron officers learned that the 102nd Cavalry Group with its two Squadrons was to be in the build-up of the assault of the fortress Europe as part of the V Corps, First Army. Intensified Training and preparations and planning to load out occupied every minute of every day until the first days of June.

When the assault was made on the Normandy Coast on 6 June, the Squadron remained at its camp at Exeter for two days before marching to the marshalling area. On 10 June, the bulk of the Squadron sailed from Weymouth on LST 504 in a tremendous convoy of build-up troops. On the 12th of June at 2120, which was still broad daylight, the Squadron debarked on Omaha Beach and rolled ashore dry-shod to assembly areas inland, and prepared to take its place in the V Corps line of battle.

NORMANDY

The Squadron was attached to the 1st U.S. Infantry Division, which had driven a salient toward Caumont. Troop "A", the first troop to land, received the mission of pushing reconnaissance on the three main roads out of Caumont in the center of the Division's sector, while Troop "C" took up the mission of protecting the right flank of the Division. The Squadron Command Post remained at Balleroy. Having found that the main enemy line faced the 1st Division linking in with the 7th British Armored Division at Le Briquissard, Troop "E" took up battery position and commenced firing missions under Division Artillery control. The Squadron was relieved of the left flank mission and one troop was employed to fill the gap between the 16th and 18th Regimental Combat Teams, while another linked the 1st and 2nd Divisions. Troops rotated in these missions combat training with Company "F" until well into July.

Remaining in position near Caumont, the Squadron continued its mission of filling the gap initially between the 18th and 16th Regimental Combat Teams, and later between the 1st and 2nd Divisions. The Command Post remained at Balleroy. On 18 July 1944, the Squadron less Troop "B", moved to Couvain in assembly and was attached to the 2nd Division, which had relieved the 1st. After spending several days in specialized training, the Squadron moved to a forward assembly area along the St. Lo-Berigny road on the 25th in preparation for an attack. This attack was part of the V Corps holding attack, which was launched simultaneously with the 7th Corps breakthrough attack west of St. Lo. Early on the 26th of July, a heavy artillery barrage pounded the enemy's hedgerow positions; this was followed by tank sorties by Company "F", sparked by Lt. Cullinan, and then the Squadron with Troop "A" on the right and Troop "C" on the left attacked across the St. Lo road. The Squadron mission was to secure the right flank of the 38th Infantry by attacking with it and then swinging right to take St. Pierre le Semilly. Lt. Col, John Lee, the Squadron Commander, was wounded by small arms fire in the first thirty minutes of the action and

Major Charles E. Rousek Jr., the S-3 was placed in command by the Group Commander. After a quick successful start, the first hedgerow was taken, but the enemy called upon heavy artillery and mortar fire, which began to slow the advance of the Squadron. With the initial objective almost in our hands, the Germans hurled a severe counterattack supported by self-propelled guns. Having suffered many casualties, our weakened troops were driven back and all the fiercely won ground was lost. Late in the afternoon, having been reinforced by Troop "A" of the 102nd Cavalry Squadron, another attack was made and this time the ground was retaken, and held. The Squadron suffered 108 casualties as a result of the day's action, and the tank, Company was reduced from seventeen to a force of four effective tanks by enemy action and by tanks being stuck on hedgerows. The night was spent in strengthening the new position as the Luftwaffe bombed and strafed. The next day saw St. Pierre le Semilly fall to the 102nd Cavalry, which passed through in pursuit of the withdrawing enemy. Although Troop "B" was not with the Squadron, it played a similar role as it made a dismounted attack on the 25th with the 5th Infantry Division. Its objective was the town of Vidouville, held by a determined enemy, and after a hard fight, they took the town. The last days of the month were spent in refitting and reorganization in preparation for the drive across France. Although its part was small, the Squadron contributed its share in breaking out of the bridgehead.

At this time, V Corps, on the American left flank was pushing a holding attack while the remainder of the 1st Army and the new 3rd Army, were breaking through the German line west of St. Lo. On the night of 31, July, the Squadron moved to the vicinity of Torigni-sur-Vire to be in position for the attack on Vire. A rapidly changing situation caused the Squadron to continue its forward movement through Campeaux where it was caught in a heavy shelling as the 102nd Cavalry Squadron was stopped on the on the south bank of the Souleuvre River. During the night of the 2nd, contact was lost and the Squadron received a mission to pass through the 102nd Cavalry Squadron and make a pursuit attack astride the Campeaux-Vire highway. Early on the morning of the 3rd, The Squadron, with Troop "B" and Company "F" leading, rushed forward and quickly established contact as a determined enemy, dug in at Optive, opened heavy direct fire with artillery and small arms on the leading troops as well as the Command Post, which was well forward. The leading troop, supported by an assault gun platoon under S/Sgt (later Lieutenant) Moak, immediately deployed to meet this fire as Troop "C" commenced an encircling movement to attack the enemy's rear. Having located the main enemy force, the Squadron was ordered to assemble as elements of the 2nd Division supported by medium tanks passed through to attack Optive.

After the fight at Optive, the Squadron was held until the 11th when it undertook the mission of maintaining contact between the British Second Army and the United States First Army as both armies pushed their attack against the withdrawing Germans who were trying desperately to hold their north flank secure while they withdrew their forces in the west to escape encirclement.

The contact mission was accomplished with two platoons pushing aggressively to keep abreast or ahead of the adjacent units until the 14th, when it was necessary, to employ all three reconnaissance troops. "A" Troop at Truttemer le Grand came under heavy shellfire as it passed through the burning town, and moved to positions southeast of the town for the night. The remainder of the Squadron remained in the vicinity of Boursigny with "B" Troop on the line just to the right of the highway leading to Tinchebray. The new Squadron commander, Lt. Col. Robert E. O'Brien, who had assumed command on 8 August, made plans to drive to Tinchebray which was the Corps objective and which lay squarely between the British and Americans. It was also the British objective.

On August 15th, when organized resistance collapsed to the immediate front of the 2nd division on the right, the Group Commander ordered the 38th to seize the city of Tinchebray, still five miles away. Orders were furnished to the troops to implement the previously made plans. "A" Troop advanced over the road running south to the St. Pois-Tinchebray Road and then turned east to race straight down the road to town. "B" Troop and "F" Company advanced across country, using hedgerow cutting tanks to make a

road, one mile of which had already been cut in anticipation of the maneuver. "C" and "E" Troops drove straight down the road, which bounded the British and American Armies. They were accompanied by a troop of British reconnaissance followed by a Battalion of Cold Stream Guards in Churchill tanks, which had been preparing to attack toward the same town on the same route. The "A" and "B" Troop columns on the road raced recklessly ahead with no regard for ambushes, traveling too fast to be hurt by the artillery fire laid on them. These two columns reached Tinchebray ahead of all other troops and pushed reconnaissance to the east and southeast where contact was reestablished with the enemy about a mile out of town. "C" Troops 1st Platoon driving south after having a bridge blown from under Sgt. McTague in the point bantam, attacked dismounted across the river to rout the enemy from his delaying position. However, before the pursuit attack could be pushed further, the Squadron was recalled to its assembly area Maisoncelles-le-Jourdan. The Tinchebray assault had done a lot for the morale, because the city had been the objective of V Corps, its capture by the Squadron earned praise from the Group Commander, and all other witnesses of the dash made for the town. The exceptionally good fortune which attended the chances taken moving so fast on reconnaissance gave rise to a tradition which was always to mark the Squadron effort.... that of sure good luck. More and more, the Squadron was going to be called "The Lucky 38th".

III.

PARIS

The Falaise Gap was closed on the 15th and all of the Allied Armies pushed vigorously to the east in pursuit of the German Army in the West. Bridgeheads were taken over the Seine on either side of Paris. The honor of actually entering Paris was reserved for the V Corps, the dean of the American Corps in France. The Squadron as part of the 102nd Cavalry Group marched to Mortree on 20 August 1944, where the group received the mission of protecting the left flank of the Corps in the area Sees-St. Andre d' Echauffour, Coulmer, St. Gauburge-Merlerault, for this flank had been exposed by the rapid eastward march of the Corps, and the slower movement of the British on the north, due to increased resistance in the British sector. Troops "A" and "B" moved out at first light of the 21st on their missions of forcing reconnaissance in the sector Cloumer-St. Gauburge for Troop "A" and Coulmer to the British for Troop "B". The two Troops reached the limit of reconnaissance at the road Coulmer-St. Gauburge after the 2nd platoon of Troop "A" drove back a determined delaying force of twenty men near St. Andre d'Echauffour and the 1st platoon of Troop "B" sparked by Sgt. Otto overran an enemy outpost near Coulmer. That afternoon, the British 11th Armored Division rolled down the road across the Squadron front, thus pinching out the Squadron and securing the Corps flank.

On August 22, the Squadron moved to Alencon and on August 23rd made a grueling night march of 125 miles to Sons Champs to swing in front of the 4th Infantry Division which it was to screen toward the Seine south of Paris. The Squadron assembled at dawn of the 24th near Villiemoissan-Sur-Orge, and set off with the mission of capturing the bridges across the Seine River between Villeneuve-St. Georges and Champ-Rosay. Troops "A" and "B" forced reconnaissance ahead throughout the day encountering negligible resistance until Troop "B" ran into delaying forces at Longumeau and the three platoons of Troop "A" drove enemy delaying forces back across the Seine at three points east of Sequiny.

On August 25, at 0530 hours, the Squadron was ordered to push vigorously to the north and screen the 12th Infantry into Paris. At 0830 hours, Troop "A" reached Notre Dame Cathedral through a surging mob of hysterical Frenchman. Troop "A's" early arrival into the city caused them to be the first complete unit to enter the city, since they arrived ahead of the 2nd French Armored division. With the arrival of Troops "C" and "E" and Company "F" shortly thereafter, the Squadron became the first American unit to enter the city. The Frenchmen left no doubt that they were glad to see us.

Lt. McAloon's platoon of "B" Troop broke through a German bridge Guard at Ivry, crossed and secured and secured the bridge with the help of F.F.I. Troop "A" then moved to secure three bridges over the Seine near the city limits.

The Commanding General of the 4th Division commended the Squadron in an Order of the Day on 28 August, an extract of which reads:

"For the final stages of the drive, the 38th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron was attached to the 12th Regimental Combat Team and given the difficult mission of securing and protecting all intact bridges over the Seine River in the city of Paris, prior to the entry of the 12th Regimental Combat Team into the city proper. Employing excellent tactics, the 38th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron entered the city of Paris early on the morning of the 25 August 1944, reporting the arrival of its leading elements at Notre Dame Cathedral at 0830 hours, and by so doing, became the first American troops to enter the city of Paris. By 1400 hours of that day, all designated bridgeheads had been successfully and swiftly captured.

The Division Commander takes extreme pleasure in commending officers and men of the Headquarters 102nd Cavalry Group and members of the 38th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron for the accomplishment of a highly difficult and technical task and for the fine spirit of teamwork and cooperation displayed in so doing."

At 1900 hours, The Squadron was relieved of attachment to the 4th Division and attached to a task force commanded by General Tompkins, Twelfth Army Group, which was charged with investigating and securing intelligence targets within the city. Since the Squadron was the first unit available, it was attached to "Task Force Paris" to give it the armed force it needed for its work. The Squadron was assembled in a park between Place de la Concorde and the Petit Palais along Les Champs Elysees. Here the Squadron spent the happiest week in its history as it received uninhibited and enthusiastic greetings of the Parisiennes and the Parisiennes. The work assigned of investigating intelligence targets was a great thrill and adventure and a lot of fun. Guards were posted in important public works and utilities including the telephone exchanges and oil and gasoline barges on the Seine. Guard duty was declared a pleasure with so much cheerful company. Morale was never higher than during the week in Paris, and the "Lucky" tradition grew stronger.

IV.

PURSUIT THROUGH BELGIUM

The pleasant interlude in Paris ended on 1 September when the Squadron reverted to attachment to the 102nd Cavalry Group and marched to Villeneuve. On the 2nd and the 3rd, the Squadron continued its march until it reached Suzy at 2200 on the 3rd. Here the mission was received to reconnoiter and secure the bridges across the Meuse between Vireux and Fumay. Troop "A", moving very fast, found the bridge, at Vireux was destroyed. "B" Troop found the bridge at Fumay destroyed and commenced operations to cross the river, first taking under fire a group of enemy defenders on the east bank at Fumay. Under cover of the fire, the 1st platoon crossed the river in assault boats and drove the enemy from the town and secured the east bank. "B" Troop's 2nd platoon located a ford one mile north of Haybes and crossed the river, followed by the 2nd platoon of "A" Troop. It was an almost incredible feat to ford the formidable Meuse River with vehicles, yet these two platoons executed that difficult crossing in well over three feet of water. The current was so swift and the river so deep, it was necessary for the armored cars to tow the

one quarter tons over. Captain Buenzel came up and took the rest of "A" Troop over the ford. With the "B" Troop platoon (the 2nd under Lt. Yontz) attached, "A" Troop proceeded north on the east bank to a point opposite Vireux. "A" Troop then advanced on Hargnies to the southeast with Lt. Yontz's platoon leading. This platoon was stopped one mile short of Hargnies by a roadblock defended by a tank and infantry. Meanwhile, dismounted men of Lt. McAloon's platoon had crossed the river in boats north of Fumay and placed themselves in a position across the only road leading east out of town. When Lt. Parr's 1st platoon cleaned out Fumay in an attack through the town, they drove the defenders into the 3rd platoon, who captured 30 of them. The rest of "B" Troop then crossed the river at Haybes on a ferry barge and proceeded to Hargnies on the direct road to the east. The first platoon, leading, ran into a heavily defended roadblock one mile east of the town and attempted to reduce it but without success. "B" Troop remained in security positions covering the road to Fumay and Haybes while the 4th Division Engineers constructed a pontoon bridge over the river. At 2345, the balance of the Squadron crossed the Meuse and prepared to attack Hargnies on the next day.

On the 5th, "B" Troop determined that the roadblock on the road to their front had been abandoned. The Troop reconnoitered toward the infantry. As "B" Troop deployed to attack further, it became apparent that the force of German infantry troops was supported, by at least 4 tanks and some self-propelled guns. Troop "C" deployed dismounted with two platoons abreast, to the right of Troop "B" and closed on the town from the south.

Approximately 300 Germans, forced from the town by Troop "E" bombardment, broke from the eastern edge of the town, coming into full view of the supporting elements of the attacking troops at a range of about 2500 yards. Intense artillery and 50 caliber machine gun fire was brought to bear on these enemy troops causing a complete rout and inflicting innumerable casualties.

Following this debacle, the enemy was reinforced by SS troops, accompanied by 4 tanks and self-propelled artillery, to defend the town actively and thus cover the retreat of the others. The tank fire delivered by this covering force inflicted some casualties. The enemy action was halted through the efforts of Captain Rice commanding Troop "E" who, by personally observing and directing the fire of his assault guns, forced the enemy tanks to withdraw. Tanks of Company "F" were brought up at this time and together with elements of Troops "B" and "C", they broke up the counter-attack and a tank patrol broke into the town itself, finding it clear. Simultaneously, Troop "A", whose attack from the north had been suspended during the artillery bombardment of the town, was ordered to close on the objective. The town, which had been set on fire by the Germans before their retreat, was secured and the Command Post brought forward.

Troop "A" was assigned the mission of regaining contact with the enemy, and pushed on to the east in spite of approaching darkness. Within fifteen minutes of receiving this order, the first platoon, commanded by S/Sgt. Briglio, had made contact with a tank outpost in a thick wood two miles east of the town and was engaged with dismounted enemy on either side of the tank. After a fire fight with machine guns and hand grenades, 82 prisoners were taken, including two officers.

At daylight 6 September, the Squadron set out to screen ahead of the 12th Infantry, 4th Division, by moving in two columns. The north column, commanded by Captain Robert E. Meyer, consisting of Troop "C" reinforced by a platoon of light tanks and a platoon of assault guns, proceeded by way of the south column's ford at the Belgium border to Boursegnies and Bois Champay, with one light skirmish which resulted in the capture of 11 prisoners. The south column, composed of Troop "A" plus a platoon each of Troop "B" and Company "F", made contact with the enemy at Willerzie, where a Tiger tank knocked out an armored car. The tank withdrew when the troop started to maneuver. Troop "A", following up the enemy force, reached Rienne, where it was pinned down by tank fire from the woods to the east. Again, the enemy delaying force moved back when TD fire was laid on them and a platoon of "A" Troop started

maneuvering to the south.

On the 7th, Troop "A" continued to push its screen to the east toward Haut-Fays, advancing on three roads. The only enemy contact occurred when the first platoon encountered a defended roadblock one mile east of Cedinne. The platoon of "A" Troop and a platoon of infantry then attacked and found the delaying force had withdrawn, leaving a self-destroyed Mark IV tank. When the Infantry (2nd BN, 12th Inf.) stopped at Transinne, the troop moved on to outpost Smuid to cover them, driving off the defenders of a roadblock enroute.

Meanwhile, to the north, "C" Troop reinforced, did a great job of screening the 1st BN, 12th Infantry to Wavreille. The Troop Commander's armored car destroyed a half-track and a personnel carrier at Voneche, while the 2nd platoon drew artillery fire from Wellin. The threat of maneuver caused the enemy to withdraw. When the Troop reached Wellin, Lt. O'Brien's platoon took the road to Wavreille and Lt. Hopkin's 2nd platoon continued its reconnaissance to the east towards Bure. Lt. O'Brien's platoon drove out the defenders of a roadblock 3km southwest of Wavreille by a dismounted attack led by S/Sgt. Martin and Sgt. T. I. Clark under cover of a barrage from the platoon's 60mm mortars. Lt. Hopkin's platoon drove out a defending force at Bure with assault gun and armored car fire and a dismounted attack by a scout section.

On 8 September the two platoons pushed out again. Troop "A" in conjunction with the infantry maneuvered the enemy out of St. Hubert and patrolled to Navets. Troop "C" was again pushing very aggressively as it advanced on a three platoon front to the line Harsin-Nassogne. During their advance, S/Sgt. Engel's platoon drove off the personnel constructing a roadblock, while the first platoon ambushed and destroyed a German staff car. Lt O'Brien's platoon raced through the night to reduce a roadblock at a crossroad in front of "A" Troop.

On 9 September, the Squadron continued its screening mission with "B" Troop passing through "A" Troop, which was getting somewhat tired. When "B" Troop developed a strong enemy force in La Roche, Captain Lewis, commanding "F" Company led one of his platoons across a ford over the L'ourthe River and cleaned out the town by overrunning all resistance. This daring attack netted 8 prisoners and 15 enemy dead. To the south, just east of Vecmont, Lt. Yontz' 2nd platoon attacked the forces defending the bridge over L'ourthe, inflicting several casualties but not preventing the bridge from being destroyed. 1st Lt. Yontz and Sgts. Oxenham and Phipps were the leaders of this action. While this action was taking place an enemy force, was discovered to be pocketed in the vicinity of Baal, to the rear of "B" Troop, and the attached platoon from Troop "A" with a platoon of tanks in support was dispatched to clean up this resistance. The enemy force turned out to be vastly superior, including an undetermined number of heavy tanks and self-propelled guns, and one of the Company "F" tanks was lost to the action of a 75mm gun as contact was made. The reconnaissance platoon called for artillery support from Troop "E" in battery position at Champlon, which effectively broke up the concentration of enemy armor and destroyed several soft-skinned vehicles. Meanwhile, to the north, Troop "C's" first platoon under Lt. O'Brien, engaged enemy delaying forces in almost company strength at the crossroad one mile from Champlon. Fire from assault guns, armored cars and the maneuvering force caused the enemy to withdraw. The Troop moved out to ford the L'ourthe and establish a bridgehead by outposting Marcourt and Marcouray the following day.

On the 11th September, Troop "B" first platoon drove out an enemy outpost of two machine guns west of Vielsalm with machine gun and mortar fire. Enemy resistance estimated to be two companies of infantry supported by an unknown number of tanks was encountered at Vielsalm and all bridges were found destroyed. Unable to make a crossing and engage this superior force, the first platoon of Troop B set up a base of fire on the high ground west of the river and succeeded in harassing the enemy and maintaining contact while the 12th Infantry forced a crossing. The second platoon attacked to occupy Salmchateau and with the assistance of attached tank destroyers, knocked out an anti-tank gun in the

cemetery. Armored car 37mm guns and mortars of the platoon covered the opposite bank with fire as the 12th Infantry attacked the town late in the afternoon. The Troop forded the river with some difficulty and out-posted the crossing that night.

On the 12th, Troops "A" and "C" spent the day constructing and guarding roadblocks to protect the Corps' extremely exposed left flank. "B" Troop of the 102nd Squadron was attached to this Squadron and with "B" Troop of the 38th continued to drive to the east while the 4th Division started to come up on the Squadron's right flank.

The first platoon of "B" Troop plus two M-10 TDs and a platoon of "F" Company light tanks were combined into a task force under Captain Meyer. When this force reached Manderfeld, it was met by small arms fire. 1st Lt. Farmer led the force in a wild charging attack on the town from two directions, with tanks, armored cars and dismounted men, which netted many prisoners. The second platoon, Troop "B", spearheaded a task force consisting of one reconnaissance platoon, one infantry platoon and one platoon of medium tanks commanded by Lt. Yontz. Their mission was to proceed to Vielsalm and on to Petite Thier, Recht and Born. No contact was made until patrols of the reconnaissance platoon discovered strong enemy positions in Born. The patrols maintained contact with the infantry platoon supported by two medium tanks deployed to make the assault. The three remaining tanks took up positions on the high ground in support of the attack. The infantry platoon and patrols from the reconnaissance platoon advanced through the town with armored cars in immediate support. Several strong points, were reduced, by armored cars and snipers, were cleaned out by hand grenade effectively silenced by direct fire from 75mm guns of tanks. All actions were successful, and the enemy was forced to retire with heavy casualties. The entire Task force occupied the town for the night. The 3rd platoon of Troop "B" was assigned the mission of guarding the Troop "B" flank and bivouacked tactically that night between Holzheim and Manderfeld, without having made enemy contact. On the 13th, "B" Troop, 102nd Squadron was stopped by machine gun and mortar fire from Auw. "B" of the 38th developed resistance in the form of small arms fire from the high Ground east and northeast of Manderfeld. This resistance was the outpost line of the Siegfried.

On the 14th, the Squadron was given the mission of securing an objective on the Kyle River on the far side of the Siegfried Line which, was not known to be garrisoned at the time. The Squadron started off boldly to penetrate the Siegfried Line with the two "B" Troops; "A" and "C" still being employed to protect the left flank. "B" Troop. of the 102nd, was stopped cold, by resistance on the Siegfried. Troop "B", 38th advanced a distance of two miles to the east of Manderfeld, when its advance was halted by machine gun, mortar and artillery fire in Krewinkel. The 2nd platoon and a section of the 3rd platoon supported by a platoon of "F" Company then attacked Krewinkel. The attack moved northeast through the town meeting stubborn resistance. Strong points were reduced by overrunning them with light tanks under command of Captain Lewis and S/Sgt. Wright. Then the enemy had moved through the town to the northeast. A quick reorganization enabled all forces to meet and repulse an enemy counter-attack from the south. Strong enemy positions, including pill boxes and dragon teeth (anti-tank obstacles) had been observed on the high ground along the road from Losheim to Roth.

The troop secured the towns of Krewinkel and Berterath and remained in observation.

Troop "C" supported the Squadron advance and, after the seizure of Krewinkel, outposted a line from that town to the village of Afts for the night.

Troop "A" was ordered into Group Reserve and assembled at Herresbach. Troop "E" supported the advance of the Squadron from battery position. Company "F" reinforced the leading troops. Troop "B" of the 102nd Squadron was relieved from attachment.

By the day's end, it was evident that the Squadron had hit the Siegfried Line as far north as Krewinkel, driving in the outposts in front of the line.

On the 15th, one more effort was made to pierce the Siegfried Line in the Squadron sector, this time by the entire 8th Infantry Regiment. Troop "A" was ordered to screen the 8th Infantry advance while "B" Troop, now reduced to two platoons, protected "A" Troop's left flank and "C" Troop protected the right flank. "A" Troop advanced aggressively but was stopped dead in its tracks when it came under heavy fire from the Siegfried. The 8th Infantry then marched to the south to take part in the Division main effort, while the Squadron undertook the mission of protecting the Division left flank from Roth to Lanzerath.

The balance of September was spent defending the eight miles of the Squadron front against strong patrol action on the part of the Germans. The 4th Recon Troop substituted for "A" Troop, which was protecting the right flank of the Division. The Squadron was spread out over the entire front leaving no reserve except one platoon of "C" Troop and no personnel for offensive patrolling. It was heartbreaking to see the strength build up in the Siegfried Line daily as the enemy became stronger. Patrol action became very aggressive and at least one sharp patrol action took place every day, mostly in the "C" Troop sector in the center. The strain was so severe that when a company of Belgian Maquis was attached to the Squadron toward the end of the month, their help was greatly appreciated. One Maquis platoon helped a "C" Troop outpost east of Krewinkel to withstand an attack of a 70 man German patrol until their limited ammunition supply gave out, necessitating their withdrawal. During the period, "E" Troop developed into a first class artillery battery, firing many missions in defense of the Squadron sector.

Mechanized cavalry was designed to perform the type of missions, which were assigned the Squadron during this month of September, and the Squadron was eager to prove that the cavalry could produce when called upon to perform missions for which its armament and training qualified it. The Squadron was determined to give the 4th Division an efficient and fast moving screen which would enable the Infantry to advance as rapidly as they could march, while protecting their exposed north flank. By fording and securing bridgeheads over the Meuse and the Ourthe, and by actions at Fumay, Hargnies, Willerzie, Smuid, Wellin, Wavreille, Nassogn, CR 38369 (vicinity Champlon), Baal, Maderfeld and Born, the platoons and Troops of the Squadron reinforced by infantry and medium tanks in the last instance, had pushed back delaying forces, which enabled the infantry to march without interruption. By the action at Rienne, Haut-Fays, St. Hubert, LaRoche, Vielsalm, Salmchateau and Losheim, the aggressive action of the small unit leaders on the spot had developed the enemy forces so precisely that the infantry was able to march into the attack without hesitation or delay. Finally, at Krewinkel, Troop "B" determined, by their gallant fight in that town, that the Siegfried Line was very much occupied and that the long march was over. Then, in screening the north flank of the 4th Division before the Siegfried Line, The Squadron found that the training of the men in acting by small units, the large number of machine guns and the excellent radio equipment, all combined to qualify the Squadron particularly well for performing this type of mission. The Squadron completed September's activities grateful that it had been granted the opportunity to function in the manner for which it had been trained and equipped.

V.

BEFORE THE SIEGFRIED

On October 1st, the Squadron took over the area of the 24th Cavalry Squadron between Rocherath and the town of Hofen, near the Roer River. This was a heavily wooded area which the Squadron covered temporarily by means of patrols only. However, as the 28th Division advanced into the forest, it became necessary to make their left flank firm so a line was formed in the woods from Rocherath to Alzen. The distance was only three miles now as opposed to the eight previously covered, making it possible for each Troop to have one platoon in support. An MLR and a support line were set up, defended in the order

right to left by A, F, C, and B. These lines were placed so as to cover with fire- cleared areas in the woods. The Siegfried Line was approximately one mile to the east with an outpost line in front. The Squadron could now afford to dispatch patrols to the front as security to destroy hostile patrols and to probe the Siegfried outposts. The strain was not nearly as great as in the Manderfeld position because of the opportunity to rotate front line duty and because the Squadron was pushing out to meet the enemy instead of receiving his attacks. However, it took a lot of work and training to make our patrols proficient in the art of patrol work in the woods. When the Squadron first moved into the sector, enemy patrols roamed at will through the entire wooded area, even ambushing vehicles on the Elsenborn-Kalteherberg Road. As our patrols began destroying enemy patrols, the latter refused to come into the line in the "F" Company sector, while our patrols were able to pin the enemy into four strong outpost positions. One of these defended 600 yards of vital high ground just east of Monschau which was in very close contact with the Siegfried Line. "F" Company defended the town and a gap of 500 yards between "C" Troop's left and "B" Troop, which defended Mutzenich Hill. "A" Troop defended Konzen Station and the hill to north thereof, linking up with the 102nd Squadron near Lammersdorf.

Having selected a proper line to defend, there was a lot of work which had to be done to establish defensive fires, final protective lines, wire mines and flare lines. The final result was that the front was efficiently covered, but with no reserve and no great strength on the line. However, it was tight against all forms of enemy patrols. The defense depended almost entirely on bands of grazing machine gun fire and artillery of which there was a high proportion of both. The rifle strength being low, machine guns gained their security from each others covering fire. Anti-personnel mines were placed in definite fields to cover specific avenues of approach. For local security of outposts and machine gun positions, flares were used instead of explosives. It is believed that the policy was to prove effective since it saved many men from being killed on friendly mines and did not give the false feeling of security occasioned by the thin line of AP mines.

There was strength enough left after garrisoning the line to conduct extensive patrolling during the night and in periods of low visibility, in order to reconnoiter the Siegfried defenses and to establish again patrol superiority in the Squadron sector. During clear daylight, patrolling was limited to the "C" Troop area, which was cut up by trees and hedges. In all other sectors, either side could see the other very clearly across the valley.

There was a lot of heroic work done on the more than 150 patrols sent out during this period. To recite the history and names of all those participating in this hazardous work, is impracticable, so once more the names of the outstanding patrol leaders or patrol members are listed below:

Troop A

S/Sgt. Fred Briglio
S/Sgt. John E. Tietjen
Sgt. George F. Combs
Cpl. Raymond J. Leone

Troop C

Sgt. John P. Cundiff
Sgt. Nicholas Gianuzzi
Tec. 4 Allen J. Anderson
Tec. 5 Jack L. Van Order

Troop B

S/Sgt. Charles e. Oxenham
Lt. Alfred H. M. Shehab
Sgt. Albert Borsello
Tec. 5 Justin A. Buchman
Tec. 5 Edward Smith Jr.
PFC Joseph Bottini

Troop F

Sgt. Muriel E. Estes
Sgt. James P. Martin
PFC George E. Crisp
PFC Dante Pancepucci
PFC Chester J. Wodzinski

Most of the patrolling was on reconnaissance to locate the pillboxes and other defenses of the Siegfried Line. This part of the Siegfried Line was a vital one to the German defensive scheme and was sure to be attacked sooner or later by our troops. The line had been penetrated to the north at Lammersdorf and to the south at Hofen. Only this salient remained in the original line, which was very strong at this point because of the necessity of protecting the Roer Dams. These dams controlled the whole Roer Valley to the north, because no army would cross the Roer against the threat of having the river flooded behind it and its bridges destroyed. This salient feature of the Siegfried, plus its covered MSR up the Roer Valley, made the German position ideal for any offensive action he might choose to make, and its position west of the dams made it imperative that the enemy hold it at all costs. When the 78th Division attacked the salient in February, Capt. Fink, the Squadron S-2, was able to give that Division an accurate description of it, based upon our reconnaissance patrols and observations made at our observation posts.

The 40 day period, 6th November to the 16th December was spent in a lot of hard work by all ranks to protect the Squadron defenses, for it was known that the German Sixth Panzer Army was in reserve and that an attack was possible through our area to drive straight on Eupen, which contained the Headquarters and all supply services for the V Corps.

While the Squadron was in this position, 81mm mortars were substituted for 60mm mortars on the basis of 2 for 3, and intensive training was conducted with the new weapon.

Of all the preparations made during this period, probably the most important one was the extensive communications system which was set up. Double nets of telephones and radios linked all platoons and CPs as well as observation posts and many machine gun positions. The result was that the Squadron Staff and the Troop Commanders were to be enabled to conduct a coordinated defense, employing all supporting arms and such reserves that could be obtained from outside the Squadron. It is significant that communications never failed during the trying days to come.

On 13 December, two medium battalions of the 496th F.A. Group moved into position behind the hill west of Monschau to support the V Corps offensive aimed at the Roer Dams. The 78th Division was attacking on the left side of the Squadron to take Kesternich, while the 2nd Division was driving in from Rokerath on the right to take Rohren. These attacks were progressing slowly but satisfactorily on the 13th, 14th and 15th, when the blow struck on the 16th.

VI.

DEFENSE OF MONSCHAU

On 16 December 1944, the German Army in the West opened its great winter offensive. The battle later became known as The Ardennes, but it could very easily have been The Battle of Liege were it not for the defense about to be narrated.

At 0535 a tremendously heavy artillery and rocket barrage hit the "C" Troop positions and the Squadron CP area, and then rolled back to hit "B" Troop and "F" Company on the Mutzenich Hill. This barrage was followed at 0600 by the attack of the 1st Battalion, 751st Regiment, 36th VG Division on "C" Troop's right and the 2nd platoon, "F" Company, S/Sgt. Bielicki commanding, defending the Roer Valley in Monschau. The spearhead of the attack was completely smashed by canister fire of the tank platoon delivered at a range of 50 yards. A "C" Troop Patrol under Tec. 5 Van Order broke up other attacking elements, as they emerged from Menzerath, with artillery and mortar fire which he called for and adjusted by radio. When "F" Company's mortar illuminating flares revealed more enemy approaching up the valley, Sgt. Bielicki requested artillery defensive concentrations which broke up this attack. However, the enemy reorganized and attempted to infiltrate into the tank positions. Sgt. Messano seized an anti-aircraft light machine gun

and placed it in position, dismounted, to block for good this attempt. Continued "C" Troop mortar fire and artillery fire finally broke up concerted enemy activity in the valley, except for sniper fire all day.

Meanwhile, the enemy launched another attack at 0830 down the winding road, which led from Imgenbroich to the north end of Monschau, known as the "snake road". This attack was first brought to a halt by machine gun fire from "C" Troop's 2nd and 3rd platoons, and then smashed by fire from the 62nd FA Battalion and "E" Troop. German patrols were observed and fired on all parts of the Squadron line during the rest of the day. When an observer reported that all the enemy pillboxes were being loaded with extra men, it was plain that another and heavier attack was due to come. Reinforcements were requested of Group Headquarters, which procured Company "A" 146th Combat Engineering Battalion, Captain Ball commanding. One platoon was given to each of "B" and "C" Troops to bolster their line, while the 3rd platoon was dug in on the hill behind Monschau to cover the front line positions with overhead fire and to protect our right flank. Six machine crews from the 186th FA Battalion, and attached TDs were also put into the line with "F" Company's hard-pressed 2nd platoon.

The night of the 16th and 17th was marked by much activity. As many as five enemy searchlights lit up the Mutzenich Hill and a score or more large low-flying planes flew westward over the Squadron line. These were the planes which dropped LT. Col. Von der Heydre's Parachute Battalion behind the Squadron line. At 0400 a "C" Troop listening post under Tec. 5 Allen Anderson on the Merzerath Hill detected a force of 60 or 70 enemy approaching their post. They called for and received fire from "E" Troop within two minutes, which broke up the enemy endeavor.

At 0615, another heavy barrage struck the Squadron line, even reaching back to the "C" Troop mortars this time. At 0630, the enemy launched his initial attack to pierce the line in "C" Troop's left. The enemy, having assembled in the draw east of Mutzenich during the night, attacked "F" Company's 1st platoon at the railroad track, but were finally driven off with machine gun fire, and punished severely by artillery fire as they retired into the draw. At 0800, the full weight of the entire 751st regiment struck the Squadron, as one attack coordinated with the initial attack just mentioned was made down the "snake road" while the main effort was made in an all out assault on the Mutzenich Hill. The attack down the "snake road" was met by machine gun fire from "C" Troop's 3rd platoon, but kept coming. It was finally stopped by tank and TD fire from "F" Company's 3rd platoon whose weapons overlooked the "C" Troop position. Artillery fire further broke up this attack.

Meanwhile, by 0900, the pressure on "B" Troop was becoming heavier. The enemy threw his whole strength against the "B" Troop line and managed to break through a gap of 200 yards between the 2nd and 1st platoons, not covered by fire and observation. The attackers continued west to overrun three artillery observation posts and to establish themselves in the woods to "B" Troop's rear. Other elements broke through the 2nd platoon's right to attack the Troop CP, which was defended by Troop Headquarters men. When the "B" Troop commander, Captain Joseph R. Sain, reported this situation, the reserve platoon of the Engineer Company was sent to his aid under Captain Meyer of the Squadron Staff. When Captain Sain received these reinforcements, plus two "F" Company tanks, he directed a counter-attack with his reinforcements and his own 2nd platoon. The counterattack, personally led by Lt. Yontz and Sgt. Oxenham, swept forward down the road toward Staffelbusch where the penetration had been made. In a viscous small arms fight, the enemy was routed from his penetration area and the line was restored. As the enemy retreated, "E" Troop's observers, S/Sgt. Fisher and Sgt. Sullivan, who had partaken in the counterattack, ceased their rifle fire to set up their radio and bring down "E" Troop's fire on the retreating enemy.

While this activity was taking place, the remainder of the line was busy. "F" Company's 2nd platoon and a patrol of "C" Troop on the right of the line each observed, and broke up with artillery fire small (60 or 70 man) enemy attacks coming from Menzerath. At 1200, S/Sgt. Zukoff, "E" Troop FO in the trenches

observed four enemy tanks on the Menzerath Hill. He destroyed one with fire from "E" Troop, and two with the 186th FA Battalion. The forth one withdrew. "B" Troop's 1st platoon was protecting its exposed right flank with a combat patrol while the FO, from the 62nd FA station, with this platoon brought down a heavy concentration on two companies of infantry attempting to cross the railroad to the front, thus stopping this attack. "F" Company's 1st and 3rd platoons were busy firing on supporting waves attacking "B" Troop. At 1000, the enemy continued his efforts on the "C" Troop trenches and in the draw north of the "hairpin turn". At this time, when one German machine gun crew managed to set up their gun on the "hairpin turn", Sgt. Martin and three men left their tanks to destroy the enemy crew with a hand grenade attack. When one company made another attempt on the "C" Troop trenches, this attack was brought under artillery fire, which stopped it. However one enemy observer managed to reach the house 70 yards in front of the trenches, only to be blown out of it by the TD attached to the 3rd platoon of "F" Company. This action exemplified the coordination made possible by efficient communications. Anti-aircraft gunners fired on a 20 plane German strafing attack at 1200. one plane was brought down with the credit going to Corporal Fitzpatrick of "B" Troop's Headquarters Platoon. "B" Troop's 3rd platoon under Lt. Shehab and S/Sgt. MacDonald was under heavy artillery during much of the action, but was never attacked. However, a patrol from this platoon under Sgt. Becker intercepted a 17 man German paratrooper patrol in the woods behind the platoon and drove it off after taking one PW.

During the height of the action when "B" Troop's line had been penetrated, the Squadron Commander had requested reinforcement of Group Headquarters. This request was caused by a PW report that the main attack was to be made in the afternoon. At 1100, the Commanding Officer of "Company "A", 47th Armored Infantry Battalion reported and received orders to patrol the woods to "B" Troop's rear and then to support "B" Troop's line. When this officers Company arrived and hour later, the penetration had been sealed off but the company completed its mission. At 1100 the commanding Officer of Company "A", 10th Tank Battalion arrived with one platoon of his tanks. He was met by the Squadron Commander, who, ordered the tanks into reserve since, by now, the penetration had been sealed off.

At 1700, in the gathering dusk, the enemy made his final daylight effort when he came in battalion strength, out of Imgenbroich, through the hedgerows which did not quite conceal what he thought was a covered approach. An FO of the 186th FA Battalion saw the target and brought down the full power of his 155mm battalion on it. The attack was completely broken up.

The enemy tried again. At 2200, a "C" Troop advanced listening post picked up a large force advancing down the snake road. Illuminating shells were thrown up by "C" Troop's 60mm mortars and the attacking force of an estimated 200 was cut to pieces by machine gun fire and artillery fire of "E" Troop and the 62nd FA Battalion. A half hour later, "B" Troop's outposts heard movement in the Stillbusch draw. Illuminating shells were again fired and 100 enemy, were estimated to be in this force. This time, fire from "E" Troop broke up the attack.

Meanwhile, the 47th Infantry Regiment of the 9th Division had come into assembly area west of Mutzenich at 1700, thus assuring the stabilization of the situation.

The next day, the enemy struck again in Regimental strength against the 3rd Battalion 395th Infantry, 99th Division, defending the Hofen Hill on the right. The attack almost succeeded but was beaten off when the infantry called down artillery fire on their own positions. Sgt. Poll. "C" Troop, distinguished himself in this defense by holding a sector of the infantry line with his liaison armored car and by bringing down artillery fire on targets to his front. Other assistance was rendered the hard-pressed infantry, by our FO's, in the "C" Troop trenches, who brought down concentrations from the supporting artillery and "E" Troop on the attacking Germans.

With the arrival of the 47th Infantry, the situation became stabilized. The front of the Squadron was cut down when the 47th Infantry relieved "C" Troop and that part of "F" Company on Monschau. With the shortened front, the Squadron spent the remainder of the month and up until January 6th, attached to the 60th Infantry, perfecting the defenses in its sector. 70 truckloads of concertina wire were put out and defensive fires were registered that covered the entire front. However, the new line was never attacked, the enemy being given a sound beating in the Ardennes.

This vitally important defensive engagement was successful, due to the coolness, devotion to duty and teamwork of a large number of people. This fact, was recognized by the Army Commander when he approved the following Distinguished Unit Citation:

HEADQUARTERS, V CORP
APO305

13 March 1945

Under the provisions of Section IV, War Department Circular No. 333, 22 December 1943, and Section VII, Circular No. 2, Headquarters, First United States Army, 4 January 1945, citation of the following units, as approved by the Commanding General, First United States Army, is announced. The citation reads as follows:

38th CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON (MECHANIZED)
3rd PLATOON, COMPANY "A" 112th ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION
COMPANY "A", 146th ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION.

The 38th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mechanized) with attached units consisting of the 3rd Platoon of Company "A", 112th Engineer Combat Battalion, and Company "A" 146th Engineer Combat Battalion are cited for outstanding performance of duty in action against the enemy during the period 16 - 18 December 1944, in Germany. During the major counter-offensive staged by the German Sixth Panzer army, the Squadron and attached units displayed extraordinary heroism and outstanding combat proficiency in repelling for three successive days the desperate attempts by the 326th Volks Grenadier Division to open the Monschau sector for exploitation by the 2nd Panzer Division. Defending a front of 9,000 yards and standing alone before the full scale German attack and vital road nets leading To Eupen and Liege. This thinly spread force held its ground in the face of five attacks, ranging in strength from a reinforced battalion to the combined elements of two infantry regiments. Three of these assaults were supported by direct self-propelled artillery and rocket fire which preceded the attacking infantry. The battalion of German paratroopers which had been dropped behind the lines on the first night of the engagement seriously harassed front line elements as well as the forces rear areas. Despite the fact that the numerically superior enemy made several penetrations, in battalion strength, isolated outposts and platoons held their lines with grim determination. Although artillery observation posts were overrun, the personnel fought with small arms to maintain their positions and adjusted devastating fire upon waves of German infantry. All enemy infiltrations were thwarted by determined fighting and close hand to hand combat. When the battle was most intense, every available man, including personnel of rear echelon maintenance and supply sections, and soldiers being treated in the Squadron infirmary, were employed to drive back the invading forces. The gallantry and combined skill of this force resulted in 200 enemy killed, thirty-one prisoners taken and countless casualties inflicted upon the enemy ranks. The strength,

courage and determination exhibited by the Personnel of the 38th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mechanized), 3rd Platoon, Company "A", 112th Engineer Combat Battalion, and Company "A" 146th Engineer Combat Battalion in denying the Germans access to the vital road net contributed largely to the ultimate defeat of the German offensive in the Ardennes.

By command of Major General Huebner:

Official:

Edward W. Skelly
Lt. Colonel, A.G.D.,
Adjutant General

S. B. Mason
Colonel, G.S.C.
Chief of Staff.

VI.

THROUGH THE SIEGFRIED

On 26 January, the Squadron was relieved in its area by the 102nd Squadron and took up the defense of Monschau again. These moves were made as the 102nd Cavalry Group concentrated to aid in the offensive to pierce the Siegfried Line and seize the Roer Dam. The German threat to blow these dams had been holding up the First and Ninth Armies on the west bank of the Roer for weeks. On the night of 29-30 January, the 78th Division on the left of the Group launched a masterful attack which took Imgenbroich to our front while the 9th Division seized Rohren on the right. As these two divisions drove eastward through the Siegfried defenses, the Squadron stabilized their attack by relieving assault infantry in the towns of Rohren, Hammer and Deddenborn. In the last instance, the infantry had not taken the town, so "A" Troop completed it's mopping up, taking several prisoners. The 9th Division then swept on to the Urft River, Pinching out the Squadron, which went into reserve in Eichersheid.

It was necessary for Corps to hold up its attack for three weeks while the water drained from the Roer Lakes after the Germans blew the main dam. The time was well spent by the 38th. Company "F" trained in the driving, maintenance and gunnery of its new M24 tanks and the reconnaissance troops trained in the use of their M5A1 tanks of which nine had been substituted for armored cars. Platoon exercises were held in mounted tactics and extensive gunnery practice was held for all weapons. The result was that the Squadron was trained and keyed to fine edge when it came time to fight again. When training exercises were conducted in conjunction with the 2nd Ranger Battalion, the team supported by the 62nd Armored Field Artillery Battalion, was completely formed and readied.

On 2nd March, the Squadron moved dismounted into the wooded and precipitous Kermeter Peninsula to find the Germans had pulled to the base of the peninsula. On the 3rd, the Rangers drove these defenders back as Corps Engineers built a bridge at Ruhrberg and cleared the road through the Peninsula of mines and fallen tree roadblocks. That night, the vehicles were brought up over the Engineer Bridge and the Squadron was ready to join the great offensive, which finally broke the German Armies west of the Rhine. By this time, the Roer had been successfully crossed to the north and the 2nd Division and other troops to the south were about to jump off in the final attack on the defenders of the Siegfried Line. On the 4th, the long awaited word to take off in the pursuit attack was received. "B" Troop, with Company "C" of the Rangers attached, marched into Herrgarten by way of Heimbach and Vlatten, and ran into determined delaying action on the hill east of town. While "C" Troop came up fast to protect "B's" right and "A" Troop protected their left along the ridge northeast of Herrgarten, "B" Troop and "C" Company Rangers executed a brilliant marching fire attack on the enemy delaying force. The attack was ably supported by armored cars, artillery and mortars and was completely successful in destroying the enemy force in not

more than two hours after the first contact was made.

On the 5th, "A" Troop with "A" Company of the Rangers attached moved out to protect the 78th Division's right flank and advanced 10 miles to Antweiler, which it reached at midnight. This tremendous advance revealed the rapid disintegration of the German defenses. "B" Troop moved through the 78th sector to enter its objective of Schwerten from the east or rear and then moved south under artillery fire to Gehn where they surprised 100 enemy laying mines on the roads to the south and east. This activity was broken up with artillery fire from the 62nd Armored Field Artillery Battalion, which supported the Squadron, and the enemy retreated to the east.

On the 6th, Troop "A's" 1st Platoon attacked the town of Iversheim while the Squadron CP, "C" Troop and "F" Company continued east to Kreuzweingarten in rear of the 102nd Squadron. The "A" Troop attack was gallantly lead by S/Sgt. Naldrett and caused many casualties to the enemy.

The situation on the 7th showed the 78th driving hard toward Dernau with the 2nd Division echelons several miles to the right rear in the endeavor to create a pocket by not pressing to hard. It was the Group's mission to protect the exposed right flank of the 78th Division. On the night of 6-7 March, the Squadron received the mission of protecting the right of the 78th Division by advancing in the Group zone. This meant a pursuit attack while protecting our own right flank. The orders were given to "C" Troop to force reconnaissance in the Group zone which included Altenahr and Kreuzberg, while "A" Troop would follow the right battalion of the 78th and peel off to enter the Squadron zone to aid the advance of "C" Troop. It was anticipated that the infantry attack would progress much faster than the one troop of cavalry. "B" Troop was to protect "C" Troop's right. All troops jumped off promptly on the 7th to perform what was to be a most brilliant piece of work.

"C" Troop, moving fast and aggressively, took 50 prisoners out of Ober-Kralingen after a sharp fight. Having cleared this town, the 1st platoon led out for Kreuzberg, followed by the 3rd platoon and an attached platoon of "F" Company tanks under S/Sgt. Lindquist, all commanded by 1st Lt. Farmer, the Troop Executive Officer. The task force descended on Kreuzberg with a dash, Lt. Farmer leading. The Lt. captured a large number of prisoners single handedly. He then led his force toward Altenahr only to be almost blown from his armored car when a bazooka shell, fired from the high ground on the right, just missed his car. There followed a fight in which Captain Lewis was killed and several other "C" Troopers were wounded, but in which the enemy was driven from his ledge. The Troop and its attached Company of Rangers then launched an all out attack on the 400 men defending Altenahr. Although the Rangers and "C" Troop lost several killed and wounded, the task force cleared the town destroying four enemy tanks and SP guns by M24 tank fire and mortar fire. It was an aggressive and inspired attack seldom equaled by any troops and earned for LT. Farmer a DSC.

While "C" Troop and the "B" Company Rangers were attacking Altenahr, the other troops were attacking in their sectors. "A" Troop watched its chance to slip into the Squadron zone and did so at Vischel Where S/Sgt. Tietjen led his platoon into the attack to kill 13 and capture 9 of the enemy. Lt. Yontz of "B" Troop surprised a column on the march at Binzenbach, fired on the column and took 52 prisoners, while the remainder of the troop protected "C" Troop's flank. During the day's offensive action the Squadron and Rangers took 400 PWs, killed 60 enemy soldiers, destroyed 25 unarmored vehicles, 2 tanks and 2 SP guns.

Following the capture of Altenahr, the Squadron was pinched out as the 9th Armored division went on to take the bridge at Remagen. On 10th March, the Squadron and Group Headquarters marched to Saverne, France to join the VIth Corps, 7th Army in their offensive to the north. However, the Squadron never saw action with the VIth Corps and returned happily to V Corps on the 30th March.

VIII.

CENTRAL GERMANY

The final march into Germany was an anti-climax, for the Squadron was never allowed to spearhead the Corps effort. The first mission was to set up screen from Fritzlar to Merxhausen near Kassel.

It was difficult to tell which way to face the screen since there were as many Germans in the Ruhr pocket behind as there were in front, which was supposedly east. Many prisoners were picked up trying to escape from the pocket.

From 11th April to 19th April, the Squadron protected the flank of the 2nd Division as it drove on Leipzig. "B" Troop had some patrol action outside of Halle, but there was little other action. These were happy days for troopers, with little fighting and plenty of opportunity to see the country. The remainder of the month was spent in searching woods in the rear of the front lines for German soldiers and guerrilla bands. On 27 April, "B" Troop had the honor of escorting Major General Heubner, Commanding General, V Corps, to Torgau where he met the Commanding General of the Russian Corps. Several of the Officers and amens attended the festivities.

V-E Day found the Squadron about to be committed with the 1st Division on its advance into Czechoslovakia at Eger. However, just as the order was received to take over a zone of advance, the order came to cease all forward movement. Two days later, the war was officially over.

So ended the war record of the "Lucky 38th". A month later, the Squadron suffered a shattering blow, when it was placed in category VI to be demobilized. It was hard to believe that the government did not need a Squadron anymore with the reputation and spirit of the 38th, but there were enough new Squadrons to fight the Pacific War. The Squadron accepted the decision sadly.

For those who served in the 38th, there will never be another outfit quite like it. She was a gallant, happy and lucky Squadron with a personality of her own. Born during the war for the purpose of fighting the Germans in Europe, it fulfilled that purpose brilliantly and then faded into history. But the Squadron, though demobilized, will never die. She will live forever in the hearts of the brave men who fought with the "Lucky 38th".

Statement of Service

38th Reconnaissance Battalion

Constituted 12 September 1942 in the Army of the United States as the 3rd Reconnaissance Squadron

Activated 15 November 1942 at Fort Bliss, Texas

Redesignated 25 October 1943 as the 38th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron

Redesignated 1 December 1943 as the 38th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, Mechanized

Inactivated 28 November 1945 at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey

Redesignated 24 July 1946 as the 38th Mechanized Cavalry
Reconnaissance Squadron

Activated 1 August 1946 at Fort Knox, Kentucky

Inactivated 12 April 1948 at Fort Knox, Kentucky

Converted and redesignated 17 May 1948 as the 38
Reconnaissance Battalion

(Troop A redesignated 20 May 1948 as Company A, and
activated 2 June 1948 at Fort Knox, Kentucky; inactivated 25 June
1958 at Fort Knox, Kentucky)

Battalion allotted 17 August 1951 to the Regular Army

CAMPAIGN PARTICIPATION CREDIT

World War II

Normandy

Northern France

Rhineland

Ardennes-Alsace

Central Europe

DECORATIONS

Presidential Unit Citation (ARMY), Streamer embroidered
MONSHAU

Belgian Fourragere 1940

Cited in the Order of the Day of the Belgian Army for
action in the ARDENNES

Cited in the Order of the Day of the Belgian Army for
Action in BELGIUM